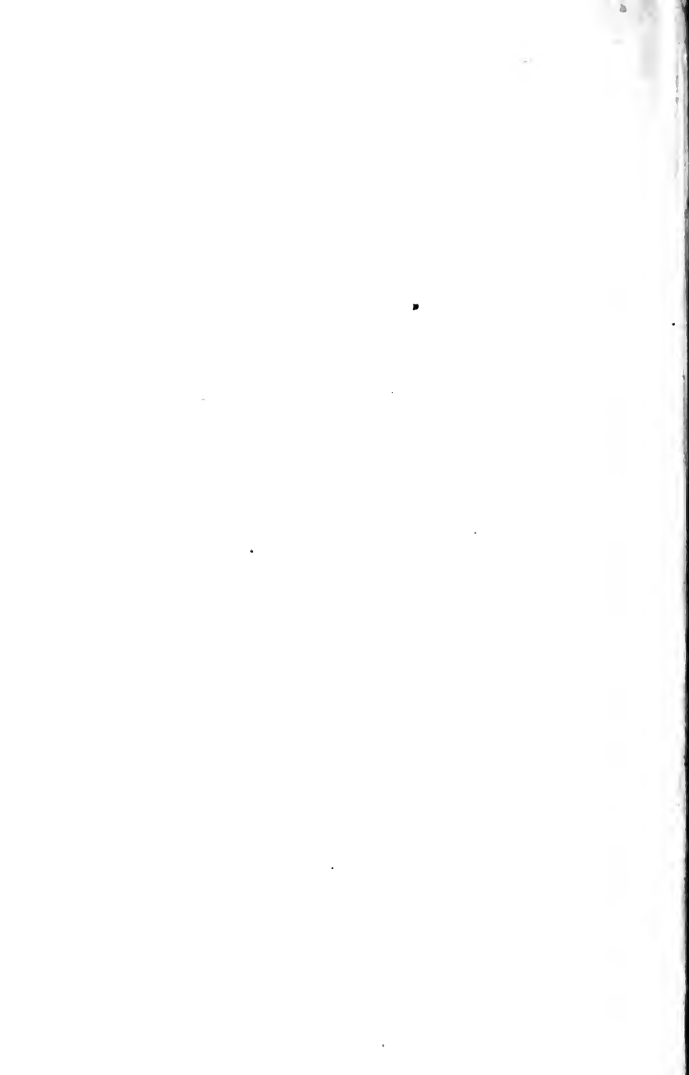


LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
C381a
v. 3

AGAINST THE STREAM

VOL. III.



AGAINST THE STREAM

The Story of an Heroic Age in England

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE SCHONBERG-COTTA FAMILY"

IN THREE VOLS.—III.

STRAHAN & CO.
56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON

1873

LONDON:
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO.
CITY ROAD.

CHAPTER I.

THROUGHOUT the winter of 1801, and the spring of 1802, the enthusiasm with which the people had welcomed the peace with France had been slowly cooling.

By March, 1802, when the "Definitive Treaty" of Amiens was announced, all idea of the peace being definitive had begun to fade away.

The most immovable of Tories in those dreary days had the best of it in prognostication. Those whose hopes of human progress had been largest and most enduring, had to confess themselves most deluded. But few kept hold, through those terrible years of the failure of freedom and the triumph of falsehood, of "blood and fire,

and vapour of smoke," in which the last century set and the present rose, at once of faith in freedom and of trust in the loving rule of God.

This world for Napoleon Buonaparte, and the next for justice, and the just, seemed as much as the hopefulness of any could grasp.

To my uncle Fyford and Madam Glanvil, indeed, the question was entirely without clouds.

"The French had given themselves up to the devil," said Madam Glanvil, "and the devil had been sent them in the person of Napoleon Buonaparte. It was quite clear, and all fair—at least as regarded the French. And it would be quite clear for us if we did not resist the devil, that is, fight the French, as the Bible told us."

My uncle Fyford, in more clerical and classical language, observed: "The democracy of Paris has gone the way of all democracies—run to seed in despotism. If

the democracy and the despotism are not to become universal, William Pitt and England will have to crush them."

France began to be embodied to us in the terrible form of the Corsican, terribly rising and growing gigantic before the eyes of the Democracy that, like Faust, had evoked the earth's spirit, and could not banish it. And, instinctively, England began to look around for some one princely will to encounter the foe.

Men began to feel bad weather was ahead, and to ask, like St. Christopher, for "the strongest, that they might obey him."

"*Il parle en roi*," said our ambassador, the Marquis of Cornwallis, writing of Napoleon from Paris. There was no trace of Jacobinism in the new French Constitution. No government could be more despotic. Also there was a concordat arranged by Napoleon between France and the Pope.

"Royalty without loyalty;" Madame des

Ormes said, "and religion without faith ! The republic was bad, but this vulgar new pomp, how can any one bear it ?"

Englishmen and Englishwomen in those first months of peace flocked to Paris, the Paris which since Englishmen saw it last had guillotined her king and queen, devoured brood after brood of her Revolution, deluged her own streets, and Europe, with the best blood of France, adored the goddess of reason, established *tutoy*-ing and the abolition of all titles, and now again was commanding men and women to call each other *Madame* and *Monsieur* (*Madame* being politely restored many months before *Monsieur*), nay, was even said to be rising to the height of *Monseigneur* and *Votre Altesse*, and secretly preparing the Temple to Cæsar in which her offerings for so many generations were to be laid.

Madame said mournfully: "All can go back to France except her own children.

And yet what should we find there ? Scarcely even ruins ; they will be buried under the new constructions. Yet I would give something for tidings of our old *terres* and the peasantry. The château is gone, and the lands are confiscated ; but I think the people—some of them—would remember us affectionately.”

After that Piers began to think of an expedition to Paris. He set his whole heart on it, I could see, although he spoke little.

But to us the year 1802 was full of many events which prevented his departure.

The timber trade had been much disturbed by the war ; my father had lost more than one cargo by privateers. Not a few of our merchants had effected a kind of Lynch law insurance by taking shares in privateers, paying themselves for piracies by robbing some one else. But this my father would never do. Piers, therefore, was pecu-

liarily unwilling to ask him to incur any additional expense for him.

Moreover, Francis went to Oxford that year, which had involved many expenses, and among others the clearing out of Piers' and my purses, to clear off all the various small debts he had contracted in the town.

Piers hoped that an entirely fresh start, and the relief which he imagined it must be to any one to have the burden of debt altogether lifted off, would be the best possible chance for Francis's turning over a new leaf.

Francis himself, of course, was completely of the same opinion. He seemed for once really grateful.

"It was more than brotherly," he said, "and he should never forget it."

He acceded with fervour to Piers' declaration that this help was the very last secret help he would give. He admitted with decision that a young man at the university

was in a totally different position from a lad at school, and must of necessity be a totally different being. "Besides, his allowance was ample, his outfit most elaborate—he never could want anything beyond." He smiled at Piers' apprehensions. "In fact, although he did not like to promise too much, he intended that neither Piers nor I should in the end be losers by our most generous conduct."

So the summer passed, without Piers seeing any means of accomplishing his journey.

But in our little circle at Abbot's Weir one act of Napoleon wrought more indignation than any besides. This was his expedition to restore slavery in San Domingo.

All the previous winter Loveday Benbow had been watching with the deepest interest the movements of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his black republic in Hayti.

She thought, with thousands besides in

England, that at last the despised negro race was about to manifest its capabilities. It was true that the supremacy of the whites had not been overthrown without bloodshed. This was to dear peace-loving Loveday the only doubtful feature. But if ever war was justifiable, it was to rescue the feeble and oppressed from slavery; if Leonidas and Wilhelm Tell were heroes, Toussaint L'Ouverture's banner was at least as pure.

The negro government once established, all seemed going on peaceably and justly. The trust of the liberated negro in liberated France, liberator of nations, is as affecting to look back on as the betrayed confidence of a child.

Looking back also, we can see that the whole movement was only too childlike; the reverence of the long oppressed for the ability of the dominant white race only too great, the copying too exact.

France had a republic, and permitted no

title but citizen. Toussaint and San Domingo must therefore have a republic, and the *ci-devant* slaves own no dignity beyond that of citizen. Poor blind copies of what was in itself a poor parody of the institutions of grand old times and grand old races, without significance or foundation! Citizens who had been trained in no civic rights, had no civic life, indeed, no civilisation, except the thinnest crust of French polish!

Then France instituted a First Consul. Immediately, Toussaint L'Ouverture proclaimed himself First Consul, and wrote to the First Consul (intending it as a compliment), "*The first of the Blacks to the first of the Whites.*"

Napoleon responded by a sarcasm, and an army. "*He would not have military honours assumed,*" he said, "*by apes and monkeys.*"

It is easy to see now how thin and imitative that black republic was; but its very

childishness only makes its history in some ways more pathetic. To us, then, fondly catching at any sign of capability in our poor blacks, it seemed like the inauguration of a new era.

Cousin Harriet wrote enthusiastically from Clapham. "Some people," she said, "thought Toussaint L'Ouverture was inaugurating a new era, not only for the negroes and the West Indies, but for the Church and the world. Some one had said that the negro race would probably commence a new age of Christianity. The Eastern Churches had had their age of subtle thought and elaborate dogma, and the Latin and German races had shown the strength and ability of man. The negro race might be destined to manifest his gentler virtues; to develop on earth for the first time the sublime and lowly morality of the Sermon on the Mount. Greeks had taught us how to think, Romans how to

fight, negroes would teach us how to suffer and to forgive."

It was a golden vision.

Only, as Amice suggested and Loveday mournfully admitted, they had not exactly begun in San Domingo with forgiving. However, the forgiving might no doubt come afterwards.

Madame Glanvil was naturally much irritated at the whole thing.

She was almost reconciled to Napoleon for characterizing the negro republicans as "apes." "Apes and monkeys they were," said she, "only he might have carried the comparison a little further home. The French aped the Greeks and Romans, Brutus and his piracy of assassins, and now they seemed likely to ape Cæsar, and more successfully; and the blacks aped the French. There was a difference; the French did it better. But apes they were, all alike."

Indeed Madam Glanvil had difficulty at times in not taking Napoleon Buonaparte as her hero. They had many points in common.

To her the great authorisation of the "powers that be" is that they be powers. Had Napoleon been a Bourbon, she said, there would have been no revolution. In his sarcasms against the republican theorists she greatly rejoiced.

His "*Je ne veux point d'idéologues*" expressed her convictions better than any formula previously invented.

She was not a little inclined to agree with him, that the swallowing up of Piedmont and the Valais were "*deux misérables bagatelles*," not worth our disturbing ourselves about.

If he would have let England alone, she would have willingly consented to leaving the rest of the world, black and white, alone with him.

“Those foreigners,” she said, “will never understand either loyalty or liberty, or a constitution. Some one is sure to tyrannize over them and make them uncomfortable. What does it matter who?”

But England was rising slowly to another mind.

In the spring of 1802 my cousins wrote to me again, mentioning the threatened French expedition against San Domingo. “Can you believe it?” they said. “English merchants have been base enough to assist in it with transports. Mr. Wilberforce remonstrated in the House of Commons; but Mr. Addington responded very languidly. Papa says we must have Mr. Pitt back, or everything will be lost—honour, commerce, negroes, and England.” They said there must be meetings everywhere; the people everywhere must be roused and instructed. They only needed to know.

“ Could you not get up a meeting in Abbot’s Weir for the abolition of the slave trade ? ”

It was so easy to get up meetings at Clapham ! My cousins had no idea what a difficult thing they were proposing.

Father said of course we could.

Piers said then of course we *would*.

I felt ashamed of myself. I had thought so much of self-denials and tests of the reality of conviction, as a little deficient at Clapham ; and here, at last, came a test to me, and I shrank back from it.

For an anti-slavery meeting presided over, as it must be, by my father, meant, to me, banishment from Court ; and, to Amice, I knew not what, of perplexity and trial.

I dared not say anything for or against. I only told Amice ; and she, after a pause, said what I knew she would say.

“ It must be done, Bride. You must do it, and you and I must bear it. Think,” she added, “ if it was only the least little

push onward to the lifting off of the terrible wrong! What does it matter what little trials we have to suffer? The wrong is there, the sin is there, the suffering is there, and that *is* the trial."

So I wrote, by my father's desire, to Cousin Crichton to say we would do all we could—receive the deputation, take the room, advertise the meeting, and explain its intention.

The year wore on. The French expedition reached San Domingo in February.

The reduction of the emancipated negroes to slavery was too plainly its object. Toussaint L'Ouverture and all the Blacks understood it, and made a determined resistance; not in vain, as a proof of what negroes well led could do, but necessarily in vain as to success against the veteran brigades of the French Republic; for the Frenchmen they encountered were veterans, and were Republicans. The First Consul was believed

to have a double object in view in this expedition: to re-enslave the Black race, and to dispose of some troublesome Republican troops, which might be too austere to bend to his imperial purpose.

In the last object he succeeded completely. About fifty thousand French soldiers were slain in the conflicts with the Blacks, or perished of disease between February, 1802, and December, 1803. In the second object he succeeded but imperfectly. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the noblest and ablest of the Blacks, brave and not unmerciful; with his determination to liberate his own race, and his noble readiness to learn of the white race, whose superiority he acknowledged, was entrapped by false promises, and sent to France to die of starvation. But the Negroes continued the resistance under more savage leaders; and in the end the last French general, Ferrand, abandoned by France, blew out his brains

“in despair,” the Spaniards recovered the island, and slavery was re-established.

In August, Toussaint L'Ouverture was thrown into the prison of the Temple in Paris, thence transferred to the Fortress of Joux, in a ravine of the Jura; the victim we all felt of too frank a trust in the honour of the white men he believed in, yet had dared, and dared successfully, to resist.

The lull of the parliamentary anti-slavery conflict, which had lasted since Mr. Wilberforce's defeat in 1799, continued. All the more important was it that the struggle should not be suffered to be forgotten in the country, and the campaign be carried on in detail. Accordingly, our anti-slavery meeting in Abbot's Weir could not be deferred.

My cousins wrote of it with enthusiasm. They considered it quite a fresh launch for Abbot's Weir. Cousin Crichton himself

was to come down to assist. At last, in October, the fatal day arrived.

Large handbills had been posted on various friendly walls and gates for a fortnight. The old town-crier had rung his bell and sounded his "Oyez!" although that was by no means an effective way of trumpeting any fact. The room over the market-house had been engaged.

Still Madam Glanvil had not apprehended the event which both Amice and I believed would involve a sentence of banishment from Court, for me and mine.

The meeting was fixed for Monday. On the Saturday before, Amice and I had a long walk in the woods of Court, the brown carpet of fallen leaves rustling under our feet, the gold and crimson canopy of fading leaves above our heads growing into a fine network, through which the blue sky shone on us; whilst below, the river rolled with its full autumn volume of sound. For

some time I had avoided dining or spending the day in the house; nor had Amice pressed it. We felt it would have been a kind of treason to Madam Glanvil. Indeed, it was hard to know how far we ought to tell her what was intended.

Our hearts were very heavy. Amice and I had often an opposite feeling as to the sympathy of Nature. To-day this was especially the case.

To me there seemed a deathlike weight on all the woods. The birds we startled flew with an uneasy cry from us, like creatures who had no home to fly to. The river rolled sullenly on. Even the green fronds of the ferns were hidden under the withered and sodden leaves. Everything spoke of joys, and hopes, and life vanished. The very pomp was funereal. So often we had wandered about those woods together, free and glad; and now we only seemed to creep through them like trespassers.

I was very sad; and it seemed to me, in my childishness, all Nature was sad too. But Amice entirely rejected the idea of such sympathy.

“Nature is too old and wise to mewl and puke with her children like that,” said she. “And she is also too grand and far-seeing. Our mother, if you choose to call her so, is a queen. She has her kingdom to care for, and if now and then she gives a kiss or a smile to our little miseries, it is all we can expect of her. She has seen so many such breakings of hearts healed. She is too stately and too busy, to heed our complainings overmuch. She knows nothing of death and parting. She only knows death as a phase of life. The dead leaves and flowers are dear to her as the cradle of next year’s leaves and flowers. If they were dead trees or forests she would not care more. She would wear them down into mould for new trees and

forests, or perhaps into bogs and coal-mines. Nothing comes amiss to her. The war and torture even among her animals do not disturb her. She is very stately and philosophical, even if she does not enjoy it; like a matron of old Rome at the gladiatorial fights. She is healthy, and has strong nerves. And to imagine she would look downcast because you and I do not know what trouble to-morrow may bring us!"

We went home by the kitchen garden. We had determined to spend our last half hour at the window-seat in Amice's bedroom. All kinds of first things came into our memory, as so often happens, when we are, or think we are, on the verge of the last things.

We passed the old damp mouldy arbour.

"Do you remember your portrait, Amice, the crocus bulb feeling for something to root itself in?"

"And do you remember," she replied,

“putting your arm around me, and half sobbing, ‘You mean *me*, Amice?’ so surprised and glad you were! and then half sadly, ‘only *me*—what am I?’”

I remembered.

“We have learned that *only me* would not quite do, Bride. Only One will do to rest one’s whole heart in. But your *only me* has been no little help—ah, Bride, for how many years!”

We went up to her room, hers and once her Great Aunt Prothesea’s. We sat on the low window-seat, and she repeated to me two stanzas of one of her German hymns:—

“Du bist der Hirt der Schwache trägt
 Aux Dich will ich mich legen,
 Du bist der Arzt der Kranke pflegt
 Erquickte mich mit Segen.
 Ich bin in Wahrheit schwach und siech
 Ach komm verbind’ und heile mich
 Und pflege den Elenden.”

“The Shepherd who carries the weak, and strengthens them by carrying,” she

said. And then rising into a more joyous strain, she began:—

“Nun ich will mit Freuden
Schen was Er thut
Wie er mich wird ansehen
Weil er doch nicht ruht
Bis er mir kaun halten
Seinen theuren Eid,
Dass ich noch soll werden
Seine ganze Freud.”

“No,” she said with a quiet triumph in her deep tones. “‘He will not rest, until to us, even to us, He fulfils his dear oath,’ that we, even we, shall become through and through, altogether a joy, ‘even to Him.’”

We sat some minutes silent, hand in hand, while through the open window came the colours of the autumn sunset, and the murmur of the river, and now and then a quiet song of a robin.

“Listen!” she said, “I will call Nature no more irreverent names. She sings all through our sorrows, as the robin sings through the cold, as the white-robed mul-

titudes in the Revelation sing on the Hallelujah, and "again they cry Hallelujah," through all the tumult of earth. She sings because she sees a hand within, an end beyond, a Face above. Or if she does not, we do, Bride! We see, and at all events, through all, we will sing. Some sighing, I think, is singing; and some silence is better, when patience and hope, who never seem long far apart from each other, make melody in the heart."

CHAPTER II.

WHEN I returned from Court that Saturday evening, Cousin Crichton had arrived.

He was one of those people to whom his own favourite epithet "sound" applied in every possible way. Health, heart, purse, judgment, doctrine, all with him were sound; not a flaw anywhere, nor an angle to make flaws in other people's health, persons, or hearts; his round, sound, solid personality, made the world around him seem more solid and better balanced, as if it had another broad-shouldered Atlas to bear it up.

Every one was in the state drawing-room. The amber furniture was uncovered.

Mrs. Danescombe, encompassed with crust after crust of clothes and conventionalities, a new tiara with an erect feather, a new silk that would "stand alone," and looked as if it would have liked it better. My father a little like an exiled potentate, as he always was in the amber drawing-room, trying to feel at home, and as little able to do it as the chairs placed at irregular angles with an elaborate pretence of being accustomed to be sat upon. And Cousin Crichton beaming with kind intentions and hospitality *in esse* or *in posse*, rubbing his hands with that effusive manner which always gave him the effect of being everybody's host; elaborately making the very best of Abbot's Weir, the narrow streets, the little houses, our church, our hills, our old grey tower and chimes, in a way which gave one the impression that he was perpetually apologizing to Clapham for having been born in so insignificant a corner;

sanguine about the abolition meeting, about the peace, about everything, and yet all the while, one could not but feel, liable in the most placid manner, at every turn, to tread on all the uncomfortable toes of Abbot's Weir, as unconsciously as if Abbot's Weir had no toes to be trodden on.

"Well, Bride," he said, kissing me and laughingly rubbing his hands, "my fair Trappist, have you forgiven us yet for being so 'terribly rich' at Clapham?"

My stepmother looked, petrified I cannot say, since the word represented rather her usual manner—she looked as if she were going back from a fossil to a living madre-pore, cold and gelatinous. Could I have said anything so rustic, so vulgar, so presumptuous?

"You have all but perverted your cousin Harriet into a reformer," he said. "I am half afraid of her going into bread and water, or Quaker bonnets, or starting off

for the Indies, East or West. She does not seem able by any means to make herself as uncomfortable as she would like."

"Cousin Harriet to the Indies?" I said.

"Is she to be married?"

"Quite the contrary," he replied; "unless she can find some one who is poor enough to make her as uncomfortable as she would wish. Seriously, Bride, she is a dear, good girl; but just a little wild about the prisons and the slaves, and the missionaries, and everybody's wrongs and rights. At last, you know, the Church of England has sent to the heathen not only the money you so magnificently despise, but a *man*, a Senior Wrangler. Henry Martyn (one of our West-country men, by-the-bye) has given up the best career in England to devote himself to the conversion of the Hindoos. At last we have sent one of our highest; not a German, nor a shoemaker, nor a separatist of any kind, but a first-

class university man, and a sound English Churchman. But Harriet seems most inclined to the Moravians. I believe if I would allow her, she would go to-morrow to teach slave children in one of the Moravian settlements in Antigua."

A thought flashed on me, and with it a pang. Could it be that this was another cord being woven into the net which I was so afraid would at last sweep away Amice from me?

The next day was Sunday. After the afternoon service Cousin Crichton asked which was Madam Glanvil. He had pleasant boyish recollections of shooting over the covers of Court. He was anxious to see the lady of the manor; the earliest state ceremonial he could remember being Madam Glanvil's triumphal entry, as a blooming bride, with the young Squire, into Abbot's Weir, under arches of flowers, with the old bells clashing cannons, and

ringing joyous peals; the tenants and townsmen hurraing, and the boys, himself among the number, indulging in an unlimited allowance of noise.

He had no idea in what a hostile form he was now entering Madam Glanvil's principality. The coach was at the church door before we had finished our inspection of various old family monuments and tablets of our own.

We came out at the old Lych gate, just as the two black footmen were drawn up in the usual form to usher Madam into the coach. But there was a variety in the ceremonial, to me terribly significant. Amice, instead of lingering behind, as usual, for a greeting from my father, was marshalled before her grandmother, who followed her without turning round for the imperial but friendly Jupiter-nod with which she usually favoured us. For a moment I caught sight of Amice's face

leaning eagerly forward and looking very pale. In another moment, by a stormy flash from Madam Glanvil's steel-grey eyes, I saw that her *not seeing* us was positive, not negative. Then the blind was drawn violently down, the footmen sprang up behind, and the horses pranced demonstratively away.

By this I knew that Madam Glanvil had heard of the abolition meeting, and that sentence had gone forth between us and Amice.

"I thought Miss Glanvil was your greatest friend, Bride?" Cousin Crichton said.

"She was," I almost gasped, my heart beating violently; "she is, she always will be."

He looked amused at the solemnity and terseness of my protest.

"Preoccupied to-day?"

"It is the abolition meeting," my father interposed.

“Ah, I remember. Her father was a West Indian planter. The young lady has slave property. I see.”

“Indeed, Cousin Crichton,” I said, “you don’t see! She is more fervent for abolition, for emancipation—than any one. We can all talk. That is easy enough. But she *suffers*.”

“The old lady does not approve?”

“Approve!” I said. That mild phrase applied to Madam Glanvil’s sentiments, indicated the depth of Cousin Crichton’s want of comprehension. “She is furious, mad, against it, against missionaries, against philanthropy, against Clapham, against every one and everything that dares touch on the subject.”

“Ah!” said genial Cousin Crichton, “very unpleasant for the poor girl! But not even fathers or mothers, much less grandmothers, must stand in the way. It is written, we all know, ‘Cut off the right hand,’ ‘Pluck out the right eye.’”

“ *Unpleasant !* ” yes, I should think it would be unpleasant for Amice ! In the bitterness of my heart I said to myself that unpleasantness was the sharpest form of martyrdom Clapham knew, or chose to know in its own person. The plucking out of the right eye, being so rich, it naturally paid to have done by proxy—by Germans, Methodists, Baptist shoemakers. I was as unjust to prosperous Clapham as Madam Glanvil. Talking was so easy ; and yet to me the talking to-morrow evening would actually be cutting off the right hand. My only consolation was to go and sit with Loveday. She knew, at all events, something of what right hands and right eyes meant ; although for her, dear soul, the crushing and cutting had been done by an irresistible Hand, and had only been made her own act by acquiescence.

She was resting on the long, cushioned window-seat, beside her a little table with a

great nosegay of flowers from the conservatories at Court. Amice sent one, or when she could, brought it, every Saturday.

She had brought that yesterday.

That little trifling token of kindness melted me out of my lofty heroics. I burst into tears, and pointing to the flowers said—

“Oh, Loveday! It is the last! She will never bring them again.”

Loveday started.

“Amice ill?” she said. “What has happened? My dear, I am afraid my deafness increases, I am so stupid. I must have heard wrong.”

“No,” I sobbed. “The meeting; the meeting to-morrow! She was not allowed to speak to us to-day.”

Loveday leant back. Her lips quivered a little, but instead of tears came that smile of hers which was like music.

“It is beginning, dear child,” she said.

“*At last it is beginning !*” taking my hand.

“You know it must have come. And she is ready. It has not come before she was quite ready.”

“But I am not ready,” I said.

“No; naturally. We never are ready for our dearest to suffer. Therefore the cup is not in our hands.”

“But not to stand by her ! Not to be able to help her in the least ! ”

“You can help her, Bride. You know how. And the bitter cup itself will help her more. It is good, Bride, it is God’s best to give us to drink ever so little of the cup He drank of; the cup itself strengthens, Bride,” she said, with the conviction of one who has tasted. “After so many thousand years, do you think the Master does not know how to mix the bitter herbs ? ”

The Anti-Slave-Trade Meeting was not impressive as to quality or quantity, “rank

or fashion ;” no chariots as at Freemasons’ Hall, no titles, clerical or lay.

We had one clergyman, a young man recently appointed to one of the parishes bordering on the Moor. Shy, he looked, and gentle, and rather overwhelmed by the prominence that had to be given to him. We had our one physician, and much to Dr. Kenton’s credit it was that he came, running counter by that act to the prejudices of Miss Felicity and of his patroness, Madam Glanvil. Madam Glanvil, indeed, had never been known to be in need of a physician. But in attending this evening Dr. Kenton must have counted the cost to science and to himself, and must have known that whatever happened in the future, he abandoned the inmates of Court to being systematically “lowered” into the grave.

There were several small tradesmen attending at some risk of loss ; there was one Methodist farmer, brought by John Wesley’s

“Thoughts on Slavery;” there were numbers of mechanics and labourers, many of them from our foundry and timber-yard; and there were all our Sunday-school children—the boys very impressive in stamping applause, when they understood it was allowed.

My father took the chair. The forms of “moving and seconding” seemed like parodies in that confidential little gathering. But Cousin Crichton was rigid in his adherence to them.

It seemed scarcely worth while to have summoned Cousin Crichton from London, and to have severed such ties, just to spread a little information among a few people, all of whom we knew, and to whom we could say so much more in confidence any day!

At least my cowardly heart said so.

But might not the same be said of all symbols? Was there not a moment in life when two people clasping hands before a

few others meant union for life and death ? Were not nearly all the testing acts of life, from the first recorded, in themselves mere trifles, such as the plucking of one fruit ?

Had there not been a moment when the future of the world depended on a hundred and twenty men and women, most of them poor and unlettered, meeting together in an upper chamber to confess that they believed One to be alive who was said to be dead, and waited for some gift He had promised ?

Poor little meeting in the Abbot's Weir market-room ! It meant something, perhaps, even above. It symbolized enough indeed to me.

But just as my father was beginning his speech, one figure quietly entered, and remained just inside the door, whose arrival took away all doubt as to the significance of the symbol to me.

Veiled and cloaked as the figure was, I knew it at once. It was Amice Glanvil.

My father recognised her also. I knew by the little tremulousness in his voice.

An officious porter would have placed for her a chair of honour, but my father motioned him to be quiet.

She did not remain cloaked. As the speeches went on, she threw aside her cloak, and her hood fell back unconsciously as she leant forward, listening, quite calm, and apparently seeing no one; but with a steady fire in her eyes.

I trembled, now, lest Cousin Crichton should say any severe indiscriminating things against the planters, as if they were all Neros, which she could not bear to hear.

But severity was not his weakness; and the audience was not impassioned enough to sweep an orator on into any wild statements.

Cousin Crichton began with praising everybody whom he could praise. And

then a new and paralyzing fear came over me that he would round off a period with "heroic women forsaking their parents, and cutting off right hands." But happily either the bad light of our tallow candles saved him from the discovery, or his better genius interposed.

He much commended the shy young clergyman.

Conservative as he was, true to Church and King, Lords, and Commons, and all the details of our inimitable Constitution, he confessed he regretted that in this instance the Upper House had scarcely taken the lead in good works as might have been hoped. The bill for the abolition of the abominable trade had once passed the Commons, but never yet the Lords. We were told indeed that "not many noble" (in my presence he did not venture on the "not many rich"). "But he rejoiced to tell them—if they did not already know—that

among those doubly ennobled by being first in this noble cause were their own Earl and Countess of Abbot's Weir ; and that one at least of the royal dukes, the Duke of Gloucester, was with us. (Prolonged cheers.)

“He would have been glad also, loyal as any man in England to his Church, if her ministers, or, at all events, her bishops, had led their flocks in this crusade. But the bishops, as a body, had not yet taken this position. Two of their number, however, were firm supporters—Bishop Porteus, of London, and Bishop Horsley, of St. Asaph's. The exceptional names deserved mention, much as one regretted their being exceptional.”

Then, with a tribute to the young clergyman present, to John Wesley, to the Quakers, and to my father, each of which brought its meed of cheering, and gradually warmed the audience into a readiness to

receive the facts he had to relate, he began the serious portion of his speech.

First of all the decrease instead of increase of the slave population through cruelty and toil, which was the originating cause of the Trade; the inciting of the natives of Africa to war, the kidnapping and packing in the hold of the ship, illustrated by a large copy of Mr. Clarkson's dreadful diagram; the statistics of death on the voyage. Thus, in a calm, English, businesslike way he went over the whole terribly familiar ground.

He would not dwell on isolated instances of excess or of cruelty. There was isolated excess in a thousand directions, among our parish apprentices, among our seamen. It was the cruelty involved in the mildest form under the mildest taskmaster, owner, or overseer, the cruelty *inevitable* in the traffic, on which he insisted. Unless the toil and the punishments in the plantations were

such as to crush a race, a tropical race, it must be remembered, working in a climate congenial to them, the population would not have to be recruited from Africa, and the trade would not be needed. Unless a system of savage warfare, secret attacks, burning villages, kidnapping, and wrongs unutterable, were encouraged in Africa, the trade would not be possible.

Then he went into the history of the struggle, giving their due to John Woolman, Antony Benazet, Leonhard Dober, the Moravians and Wesleyans, and the American Quakers, and alluding to the labours of Granville Sharp, of Clarkson, and to the ehampionship of Mr. Wilberforce, he concluded with a contrast between the professions of liberty, equality, and fraternity in France which had ended in this invasion of San Domingo, and in the imprisonment of Toussaint, the greatest negro, in the dungeon on the Jura—and the freedom based

on a religion and a Constitution like our own; between the noisy explosion of revolution ending in despotism to the white, and slavery for the black, and the great patient struggle against wrong, carried on now from the Houses of Parliament to every corner of our country, and before long, as he believed, to end triumphantly (or, rather, as he dared to hope, to begin a fresh era of conflict and victory)—by the abolition of the slave trade.

And all the time I was listening, not in my own person, but in that of Amice Glanvil.

When Cousin Crichton closed, I ventured to steal another look at her face. It was full of a great joy, although I could see it was wet with tears.

The young clergyman pronounced a benediction. We sang the Doxology; and then the meeting broke up.

Amice caught my eye, and I rose instinctively to move towards her. But she

looked very grave, shook her head, motioned me away, and in another moment, with her rapid movements, had cloaked herself, and disappeared from the room.

I was anxious how she would get home. But before I could say so, Piers had disappeared, and did not return among us until he had watched her safely inside the gate.

At the gate she turned and shook hands with him ; but she said nothing.

And as Piers came back he met Reuben Pengelly on the same errand.

“Poor lamb !” said Reuben. “We say the words, but she has to carry the wood for the sacrifice.”

I felt sure I understood what she meant. She would resist her grandmother’s will for what she deemed a duty, a confession of the right. But she would not by that means win for herself one moment of pleasant intercourse with us.

When should I know what or how she

had suffered? Loveday said we did know how she endured, and that was much.

I knew sooner than I expected.

The next morning a letter came from Amice, saying, "I have told Granny I mean to see you, and to wish you good-bye. Come this afternoon to the old hollow trunk that hangs over the violet bank, by the river, just inside the gate. *It is begun*, Bride. I feel that my work, the work for me, has begun. And it will not be left unfinished."

When I came to the old trunk we had sat on so often, she was there. She took my hands and kissed them. I would have thrown my arms around her, but she would not have it.

"*I am one of them*, Bride," she said, "not by condescension or sympathy; but really, literally, by *birthright*. Granny says my mother, my father's wife, was a slave. Therefore I have a right to care for them. You see I am scarcely myself free-born."

And as she said so, her eyes kindled, her form rose into such a majesty, and her face so shone with the feeling and purpose of the soul, as to give one some conception of what might be meant by a "spiritual body." Free-born indeed she was; free-born in the old Teutonic sense, every inch and every thought of her, *free*, that is, *noble*; possessor of herself and of who could say what besides, free and royal as the heir of a hundred generations of royalty.

"Granny would never have told me," she said, "unless she had been beside herself with anger. And I believe she would give much to have the words unsaid. It happened in this way. It was on Sunday afternoon, as we drove to church. On a bit of old wall fronting the gate was one of the advertisements, and in the larger letters, '*Anti-Slavery Meeting, Monday evening,*' and '*Piers Danescombe in the chair.*' She was there in the morning, but she had not seen

it. Instantly she leant out of window and stopped the carriage.

“Cato and Cæsar came to the window looking very conscious and sheepish.

“‘Tear down that,’ she said.

“She was too angry for epithets.

“The poor fellows tore the paper into shreds.

“‘Take up the shreds,’ she said, ‘and carry them to Mr. Danescombe’s counting-house to-morrow with my compliments, and tell him I shall prosecute with the utmost rigour of the law whoever dared to fix that vile trash on my walls. Now drive on.’

“Cato trembled, but I caught sight of a grin on Cæsar’s face as he retired.

“‘Now,’ she said, turning to me, ‘when did you know of this?’

“‘Some weeks since,’ I said.

“‘And that little silky creature from the town, too,’ she said. ‘Fool that I was to expect more from *your mother’s child*!’

“And in that frame of mind we entered the church.

“How we left it you know.

“As for me, I could not help being more than half on her side. How could it look to her, but as a long course of concealment? How could she understand all the reasons which made us feel it hopeless to tell her beforehand? her deafness, her imperiousness, the hopelessness of arguing with her, the impossibility of abandoning what we considered right.

“Before the evening I should have made a determined effort, and told her all I felt, cost her and me what it might; and it might have ended, after a storm, in our understanding each other better than before.

“But for those words ‘*your mother’s child!*’ I think she would have withdrawn them, if she could, and have concentrated her anger on you and your father. But she could not tear the words out of my

heart; nor could I suffer all she said of you.

“I need not tell you that, Bride; it would be ungenerous and unjust. You know her; and how much, and how little, such words mean.”

I knew, indeed, that Madam Glauvil did deal largely in superlatives, although not at all in the style of the superlatives of Clapham.

“However, she roused me beyond endurance. I defended you—I could not help it,—and said a thousand vehement things, which of course had a doubly vehement effect, shouted close to her ear. It is so difficult under the calmest circumstances, to discuss anything with a deaf person without seeming in a passion.

“I said you and your father were the very soul of truth and honour.

“Then she turned on me and said again—

“ ‘She had been a fool to expose me to low hypocritical influences, but that no influence would ever have persuaded a true Glanvil to do what I had done. What could the *child of a slave* know of honour?’

“As usual, her own passionate words, once uttered, cooled her.

“She became reasonable, and would have softened them.

“ ‘I mean no insult to your mother or your poor father,’ she said. ‘She was a faithful wife and a good woman, they say, and her birth was not her own fault, however her beauty may have been his ruin. The misfortune was his, the fault was his, or her Spanish forefathers’, at whose door it lies that these beautiful half-castes exist. I am sorry I said anything.’ (She was actually apologizing to me for my birth.) ‘Forgive it, child. We will both forget and forgive. But never talk to me, and

never expect me to tolerate one of that Danescombe set again.'

"And she did say very bitter and untrue things; more than I felt I ought to bear. I was perfectly calm then. And when I am quite calm I can always make Granny hear without shouting. I spoke quite slowly, so that she must hear, and I could see that she heard.

"First of all, naturally, I defended you; and then I said, 'Granny, I thank you more than I can say for what you have told me. For now my duty is clear. If my mother was a slave, the slaves are her kindred, and mine. I have a duty to her race and mine, not only because they are men and women—because God made them and our Lord redeemed them—but because they are *my mother's people*. And in one way or another, I will devote myself, body, soul, and substance, to helping and serving them in every way I can, as long as I live.'

“She did not storm any more, poor Granny. She looked actually bewildered and frightened, and began to contradict herself.

“‘Your mother was not exactly a slave,’ she said, ‘when my poor George married her. She had been, as an infant; but her parents were set free in San Domingo. They were more than half Spaniards: *Mustees* I think they were called in our islands. Three parts white, or more. They were free, and living on a plantation of their own, with this their only daughter, when your father saw her.

“‘Poor George! I cannot blame him much; though I did blame him bitterly, more than I should, perhaps. I am a hot-tempered old woman, now, at all events. She could not help her beauty, and no woman he loved could help loving him. Poor fellow! I wrote to him again before she died, and sent some jewels for her; and she

sent me a pretty message, poor thing. And then she died, and he died, and there were none left but you and me. And you have been not so bad a child, or would not have been, but for those hypocrites. So let us forget and forgive.'

"It was much harder, Bride, to oppose her gentle, and pleading tenderly, like that.

"I ventured to take her hand. It was rigid, but she let me keep it in both mine.

"'Dear Granny, I *can* never forget, I *must* never forget. I will be your own child, if you will let me, as long as you live. But now, and always, *next to you*, I will, I must, I ought to care for *my mother's people* and my father's servants, his slaves, and my kindred. My mother's people must be mine.'

"The little gleam of rare softness and tenderness vanished.

"She snatched her hand from me and

went up-stairs. I took her candle, as usual, and followed her up to her bedroom. At the door she turned and said, with a concentration of suppressed passion, ‘You may sit at my table still, if you like, being your father’s child; *as long as I live*, as you say. And then, if you please, you may go to your mother’s relations, to the King of Dahomey, to the Pope of Rome, or the Methodist madmen, or wherever you please. I dare say you will not have long to wait.’

“And so,” Amice concluded, “I do sit at her table; and neither of us speaks a word. Her heart—poor dear Granny—burning with wounded love and pride, and a sense of bitter ingratitude and wrong; and mine overflowing with pity which I cannot utter or look; with reverence for all the long reticence which my many provocations never made her break through during all these years; and with sympathy for what she must feel about my ‘wilful folly and

heartless ingratitude.' Never once to have suffered me to see a glimpse of a fact which she believed must have at any moment brought me down on my knees in abject humiliation and subjection! And when she brought out this terrible, irresistible weapon, faithfully concealed so long, to find it indeed terrible and irresistible, but altogether turned, as she must feel, against herself. The thing I am most sorry for as regards myself and you, Bride!" she resumed, "is this appearance of concealment about the meeting. I don't think we could have done otherwise. But this made me more resolved to throw off all disguise, and come to the meeting myself. I thought over it all Sunday night, Bride. I hope it did not look like bravado, or any reflection on my father. You think I did right?"

"I am sure," I said, "it was not bravado; it was *confession*; and how are we to help confession looking like bravado sometimes

to those who hate what we confess we believe?"

"Yes," she said. "And for those who are gone, whom we cannot see or consult any more, I always feel we must try to do, not what they would perhaps have wished when they saw in part, but what they would wish now that they see 'face to face;' that is, as far as we can find it out. And I think there is no doubt what would be wished in heaven as to not driving black men like brutes, or as to teaching slaves of Him who makes us all free."

"No doubt at all, I should think," I replied, "as to what is thought in heaven about the slave-trade."

"No," she said; "so I came."

"And now, Bride," she said, "good-bye. You may kiss me if you like, now you know I am the daughter of a slave."

"But why good-bye, Amice?" I said.

“ You told Madam Glanvil;—and now you are fairly in opposition ! ”

“ For shame, Bride ! ” she said. “ I shall begin to think ‘ Methodism,’ as Granny calls it, does lead to insurrection, as she says. I belong to the Church of England, and believe in the Catechism ; and if I have any leaning to any other form of Christianity it is to the Moravians, who are the most conservative and submissive people upon earth. In my Great Aunt Prothesea’s hymn-book, there are whole sections of hymns on the stillness and resignation of the heart, on patience in inward and outward tribulation, on poverty and lowliness of spirit. Do you know, Bride,” she said, with one of her brightest sudden smiles, “ I really feel in some way nearer Granny now, and love her better than before. I am not sure sometimes that I do not really love her more than I love you or any one, as I ought perhaps always to have done, and never

could do. I am so sorry for her. In every possible thing, Bride, I will submit to Granny, as far as possible; and in this thing, which costs me more than anything, most of all. I have told Granny that you and Mr. Danescombe, and Piers, are noble as Norman conquerors and crusaders, and saints and angels, of better blood than the Glanvils, and ten times better Christians than any of us. And I have also told her that until she sanctions it, I will not see one of you again."

There was no moving her. She had "begun" indeed, as Loveday had said. We neither of us said "good-bye."

We just gave each other one long kiss, and turned and went home our different ways.

So, as it seemed to me, the sun was blotted out of my life; and Amice's warfare began.

CHAPTER III.

COUSIN CRICHTON went away in a state of radiant satisfaction.

“Who said the tone of Christianity in these days was lowered? Who said people were not ready to cut off the right hand, to go to the rack, the block, the stake, if duty demanded?” His sense of “*solidarité*” in such matters was keen, although the word was yet unborn. He felt, I am sure, as if he had cut off his own right hand, metaphorically. That is, he felt the virtuous satisfaction, and rejoiced in us who had to bear the pain. For Court was closed to us, as absolutely as any Bastille.

Of all our circle only Cousin Dick Fyford and the Vicar continued to enter those dear

old gates between the savage heraldic griffins.

And Dick's reports were anything but cheerful or cheering. I began almost to believe he had really fallen in love as I had "fallen in friendship" so long ago, deeply, hopelessly, and for ever.

"The gates of Court were like the gates of Dante's hell," he said. (He had been cultivating poetry of the severest and gloomiest kind. Byron was not yet available—had not yet written his satire on "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Despairing young persons had therefore to draw from deeper sources, and Dick had found a translation of Dante in Uncle Fyford's library congenial.)

"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here,"

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate,"

was, he considered, breathing out of the savage mouth of those heraldic griffins, written like ancient Hebrew texts on the

posts of the doors, furrowed on the faces, black and white, of domestic and host. Only to find a similitude for Amice had he to rise to another book of the Divine Comedy.

She was radiant, angelic—more than angelic—tender and good as a dear child, beneficent, gracious, imperial, and, alas! far off as the Madonna Beatrice.

Madam Glanvil never spoke to her. Nor could it be said Madam Glanvil spoke graciously to any one. She seemed, he said, in a kind of way defying the world to come nearer to her than the child she was thus rigidly keeping from her.

“Very strange,” said Dick; “it seems as if those two really loved each other better than before.”

I remembered Amice’s words.

I thought it was very probably true. Madam Glanvil’s speech was at no time

exactly conciliatory, or calculated to promote tender feeling.

Perhaps the two were going through a "discipline of silence," as Claire suggested, and it was doing them both good.

But then, for a moment, came a little foolish pang, whether it could be possible that Amice was really not only outwardly but inwardly submitting to her grandmother's will, and making a sacrifice of me in her heart. She was not a woman to do things by halves. And if her conscience did get the upper hand of her good sense, it might possess her like a demon, and lead her to do anything, everything that was hard and dreadful and agonizing to herself. It is just of such strong, true, passionate, steadfast natures martyrs are made ; of such natures, a little twisted, anchorets, faqueers, Simon Stylites.

And I, feeble, smaller, with less range, less tone, like a harpischord to an organ,

like my stepmother's spinet to the organ in Westminster Abbey, as I was beside Amice; yet she had always called me her "good-in-everything," her "good genius of common-sense." And I was not near to plead for myself or for her. And Dick said she never mentioned me, never asked for any of us, never alluded to us.

Did it mean that she was really giving me up; or did it only mean she trusted without the shadow of a fear that I would always trust her without the shadow of a doubt?

Yes, it meant that. In all my sane moments I was sure it meant that.

Loveday never had the least doubt it meant that.

Nor had she the least shadow of a doubt who would conquer in that contest between Amice and her grandmother. "Love is stronger than Death," she said, "and than all the shadows of death. After all, death, that is, hatred, pride, selfishness, has only

shadows for its weapons, and can only conquer shadows. And Amice's love and truth and faith are no shadows. She will overcome sooner or later: she will conquer evil by good. And I think it will be soon."

It did not seem soon to me. And the evil thing which severed Amice and me seemed to me at all events a very substantial negation, as substantial as the negation of a rock to a ship breaking to pieces on it.

It was a time of negations and partings.

At last, Piers was able to fulfil his desire of paying a visit to France.

He had no need to gather fresh details as to the situation of the château where Claire had passed her childhood. That, I knew, was what the journey to France chiefly signified to him: but even I never said so, even to him. And to any one else it seemed the most natural thing in the world that any

young Englishman, who was able, should take advantage of the closing of the war-gates, to enter the land those open gates had closed to us so long, and might close again so soon.

Madam Glanvil was the only person who looked censoriously on the expedition. And that she did so was only implied in an observation Dick heard her make to Uncle Fyford.

“The First Consul is doing one good work, at all events,” she said. “He is converting the Whigs. I understand he says he could buy all the French Republicans with a little money and gold lace. He seems to buy ours without any such expenditure. Charles Fox was hand and glove with him, I understand, in Paris. No wonder if the small fry follow.”

“You will pay homage, my friend,” said Madame des Ormes, when Piers came to

her room to take leave, "to Madame, or *Son Altesse*, the First Consuless, or whatever they call her, the Creole wife of the Corsican. They say she has a fine Court at the Tuileries, and dresses well. They have set up the opera again. Scarcely necessary, I should have thought. That new theatre at the Tuileries must be more attractive. And Italians and Creoles have talents for the drama, frequently. Of the older noblesse you will find more in England—I had almost said at Abbot's Weir—than at Paris. M. Buonaparte's *corps dramatique* is complete now, I hear. They have a Church as well as a Court; priests who take the oath to violate the confessional if the government demands information about what it is pleased to call a *Plot*; bishops appointed by the Corsican, and all the clergy paid by him. It is quite complete, and all absolutely in the Manager's hands."

"Mamma," said Claire colouring, "M.

Piers said he would inquire about our dear old curé at Les Ormes. At all events *he* has not taken that oath."

"No, indeed; many of the old priests are in prison, God bless them," replied Madame. "See, my children," she added, "I grow bitter! Do not the books of piety tell us that all earthly glory is tinsel, all courts but a stage? Only some tinsel is better taste. There is gilt paper and *ormolu*. And to us, children of time that we are, a thousand years will seem longer than yesterday."

"Mamma," said Claire in a whisper. "It has done one good work, that new government. It has abolished the festival for the guillotining of our king."

"That is always something," Madame conceded. "And the Fast for the Day of his Martyrdom, the prayers, and the weeping, no power in France or out of it can abolish."

“And,” suggested sanguine Claire, “they have abolished the Decade, and restored the Week, and the Sunday, and opened the churches.”

“Condescending certainly to old-fashioned people, so let them say September and Sunday once more,” Madame admitted.

“There is nothing you can give me to do, Madame?” said Piers.

“My friend,” she replied, “my living are here. My dead only are there. Would you have me send you on a pilgrimage to tombs and ruins? I cannot even guide you to those! Our people are industrious. They will not let even the stones of our ruined châteaux be wasted. They will have built useful little *bourgeois* houses with them. But the King, the Queen, Madame Elizabeth—who will tell you even where they sleep, that you might weep for them? My dead in France have no tombs. It is not until the third or fourth genera-

tion that men build the sepulchres of the prophets."

"Mamma," pleaded Claire, "there is M. le Curé, who instructed me for my first communion. He was so good, and all the people loved him. And there were many who would like to hear of us, of you, if M. Piers were near Les Ormes, any day."

"*Ma chérie*, Les Ormes is near nothing. except Port Royal des Champs. *There* are tombs at all events, although trampled on and in ruins."

"Madame," said Piers, glancing at Claire, "I will certainly make a pilgrimage to Port Royal des Champs."

"Strange that I have not an introduction to offer you," she said. "It was not so ten years ago. Stay, I will write a little letter for our poor curé."

"Mamma," murmured Claire. "My uncle, l'Abbé, says the First Consul has

a strong secret police, and at the head of it a terrible M. Fouché, who was a Jacobin. If compromising letters were found——”

“True,” replied Madame. Take this,” she said; and opening a little cachette, she took out a signet ring and placed it on his finger.

“This is our family *devise*,” she said. “M. le Curé will recognise its bearer as a friend, and will tell you anything he can. Or any of our old servants. But what dreams am I indulging? Who knows where the curé is, or the church? And our old servants may have been made conscripts and killed long ago; or republicans, and may denounce you; or proprietors, and not too anxious for news to disturb their possession; or they may have been massacred, or *noyaded* as faithful men and women. Take care, my friend, how you use that token. But keep it always, if you will, as a memorial of the old days of

our race, and of all the chivalrous kindness of you and yours to an old French citizenne. It is not a bad motto," she concluded—" '*Foi, roi, loi,*' in a circle—so that no one can say which comes first. Make it Divine, my friend, and then certainly it matters little where the circle begins."

He kissed her hand, as we had been used to do from childhood, grasped Claire's for an instant, and went away.

He was to start the next evening.

It was his birthday, in January, the month which had once given and taken away so much, in our home.

I went up to his room to help him pack, or rather to talk while he was packing. He was always independent of feminine aid in that matter. But carefully as I had looked over everything, there might yet be some stray button or string to sew on.

He talked very fast. He was in high spirits.

Once more it was a beginning for him, and felt like an ending for me.

“It is very unreasonable,” he said, as he gave a last impressive stamp to his carpet-bag, “to feel as if I were going to do something important. It is scarcely farther, in time, to the French coast than to Clapham, scarcely as far, if the wind is fair.”

“No,” I said. “We have heard enough of that lately from Dick. He says the French say they could be in London in a few hours, from Boulogne. And he would greatly like to be under Nelson’s command and to see them try.

“I hope they will wait till I come back, and have accomplished my mission, whatever it is,” he said.

“Do you remember years and years and years ago,” I said, “when you were a little boy, and when we first met Claire, and when Claire kissed me with the fool’s cap on, and you said ‘*it would be worth while to*

do something like that for her,' and I said, 'there was nothing to be done;' and you said something always came to be done when it was the right time."

"Bride," he said, stooping over the port-manteau, and energetically snapping the lock. "Your grammar is getting very confused. Unhappily you never went to Mr. Rabbidge's and learnt about aorists and imperfects, and narrative tenses. Something has never come, you see. And to go to France to look for it does seem what Uncle Fyford would call Utopian and Mr. Rabbidge chimerical."

"Yet you are going," I said.

"It would be something to find there was nothing to be done," he answered. "To find, that is to say, that France can do nothing for her; and, so, that there may indeed be something for us to do for her."

And so the next morning, to Madam Glanvil's indignation, to Madame des

Ormes's perplexity, and a little to Claire's; but full of purpose and hope, which, as usual with him, came out but little in words, in the crisp January frost, he went off across the moors to the sea.

CHAPTER IV.

THUS Piers went out, it seemed to me, into the bracing air, and the morning sunshine, and I turned back to the dusk and the chill.

Such a dimness and chill fell on everything when he was gone! Such fears came for him, for England, for the slaves, for Amice, for our little Sunday-school, for everything! And indeed those winter days early in 1803 were dark months for England; and for Abbot's Weir; chill and chaotic—full of uncertainties and indecisions for us all.

In February England was thrilled to her remotest bounds by one of those great

common impulses which now and then prove the living unity of national existence, and in proving quicken and raise the national life.

The trial of Peltier was going on in the Court of Queen's Bench. The prosecutor, our Attorney-General, on behalf of Napoleon Buonaparte; the defendant, an obscure Royalist emigré; the accusation, libel against a friendly government; the advocate Sir James Mackintosh. In reality, England felt, and millions in silenced Europe felt, it was Liberty that was on her trial in her last asylum; the accuser, Despotism embodied in the First Consul; the advocate the last country in the world in which the press remained free.

Mackintosh's eloquent words vibrated throughout the land. England was quite capable of being simultaneously electrified to her remotest towns, and villages, and homesteads, before the electric telegraph

came into being ; simultaneously, for all working purposes.

We make too much, I think, sometimes of these material inventions. Eager groups awaited the little badly-printed reports of the trial, and news from the passengers, at every inn-door, as the lumbering coaches passed through. Slow communications, clumsy reports ; yet the heart of the old country beat warm and fast enough.

Mackintosh called on his countrymen to “ pause before the earthquake swallowed up the last refuge of liberty. Switzerland and Holland once had a free press. Switzerland and Holland (two of Buonaparte’s *miserables bagatelles*) existed no more. Since the prosecutions had begun, fifty old imperial free German cities had vanished. When vast projects of aggrandisement are manifested,” he said, “ when schemes of criminal ambition are carried into effect, the day of battle is fast approaching for

England. Her free press can only fall under the ruins of the British Empire. Her free government cannot engage in dangerous wars without the free and hearty support of her people. A King of England who in such circumstances should conspire against the free press of the country would silence the trumpet which is to call his people around his standard."

The verdict was given by the reluctant jury, as a matter of law, against Peltier. But the defence was translated into every European language (into French by Madame de Staël); and the challenge of England was virtually thrown down to Napoleon.

For in those months England was "drifting" into war, alone, without one nation in the world to stand by her, and without a hand she trusted at the helm.

Rumours reached us of insults offered to our Ambassador, Lord Whitworth, at the Court—they began to call it a Court—of

the First Consul ; insults borne by England with the kind of easy patience of large creatures, which so often misleads other creatures to provoke that large and careless tolerance beyond its limits. Remonstrances against Buonaparte's aggressions, met with a contemptuous sarcasm, in reference to our refusal to yield Malta, by angry taunts of "perfidious breach of treaties" and threats of the consequences, launched in full saloon at Lord Whitworth ; until, at length, the "nation of shopkeepers," as the First Consul called it, was roused to that total disregard of profit and loss, that fearless daring of all consequences which, however frequently repeated in our "island-story," seems always to take the rest of the European world by surprise.

War was declared, or rather accepted. Two French privateers were captured. And in one of the dramatic rages with which he cowed the rest of the world, the First

Consul, in revenge, seized ten thousand British subjects, who happened to be peacefully travelling in France; the ten thousand "*détenus*," who throughout the campaigns of Nelson and Wellington had to linger out the weary years in French prisons, or, at least, in a society which to them was all one prison.

And among them was our own Piers.

We refused to believe it for a long time. Piers, we said to each other, could speak French so well, he was sure to escape when others would be detected. But then, acting, or any kind of stratagem or disguise was so foreign to his nature; and his whole bearing was "so English," Claire said, despondingly, though far from disparagingly. But then, she added, there were sure to be kind souls ready to help a stranger in France; had they not found it so in England? and would her compatriots be out-

done? She was sure there must be fathers and mothers and sisters in France who would feel how Piers would be missed, and would help him to return to us.

In March I had received a letter from Piers, quite long for him. He had made his way to two of the Marquise's former estates. He had looked for the Curé, but in vain. One hundred and fifty priests were in prison in the diocese of Paris, for refusing to take the oaths required by the government. "And yet," wrote Piers, "his Highness has placed the bust of Brutus in the Tuileries, to convince every one that liberty is as dear to him and to France as ever."

He did not find the peasants miserable. Mr. Arthur Young had said before the Revolution that more than half of the land of France already belonged to the peasants, only burdened by compulsory service (in making and repairing roads for instance),

and by other oppressive burdens. The Revolution abolished the burdens. Piers supposed it was so on this estate of Madame's. Her peasants affectionately remembered the Seigneur's family, spoke most cordially of them, asked for Madame and the little Demoiselle; but did not exactly wish to have the burdens re-imposed. The Department now made the roads and paid for having them made. And they had more to eat and drink, and better clothes to wear; at least they would have, were it not for the war and the conscription. They wished England would be tranquil, and the *émigrés* nobles would not excite her to combat, as it was reported they did. Then Madame might come back to live among them—if not exactly as before—the château had unfortunately been burnt—yet to such wealth as was compatible with a republic.

Another of the Des Ormes' estates had been purchased by the former Intendant

for a nominal sum, and he and his aged wife listened with tearful interest to all Piers could relate of Madame and Claire. The old man regarded himself as only manager of the property, as of old, and looked forward to restore it one day to Madame. But he entreated that she would come back without delay. For, he privately told Piers, "he had a great-nephew, his heir, brought up in the atmosphere of the new *régime*, if *régime* it could be called, and he could not be sure of his loyalty to any one or anything. He was a fine young man, however, and his mother a lady of the fallen noblesse—the petite noblesse certainly, not such a house as the Des Ormes. But he had sometimes thought whether an alliance might be possible?" Piers had seen the great-nephew privately, and thought him an intolerable dandy and upstart. He could scarcely bear to write the words of the Intendant, but the old man had insisted, and as an envoy

he thought himself bound to yield. In a fortnight, or less now, he hoped himself to be with us again.

He wished to say something cheering to Madame. But it was difficult. I must judge how much to mention to her. Ten years was a long time anywhere. In ten years babies grew into youths, children into men, young men into thrifty fathers of families. It was a very long period in a country which could not count ten years from its new era, in which an institution which had lasted a twelvemonth seemed almost antique. To come back to old England he felt would be like stepping from a raft, just lashed together out of broken pieces of the ship, to *terra firma*. He only trusted Madame might feel the same. England was perhaps a rocky, chill, cheerless region compared with her sunny France. But it *was* a rock. And just now the seas seemed very stormy. He felt he

should have a little storm to weather in getting home. People's minds seemed excited by the news from across the Channel. Something about the conquest of Malta; and an *émigré* pamphleteer who had been libelling the First Consul. He hoped England would stand firm. George Crichton was returning that very day, and would bring the letter, so that, at least, was all safe. He had one more journey to make to find the Curé Madame had wished him to see: and then, home.

George Crichton was all safe certainly, and returned home; and Clapham seemed to me a little self-satisfied as to its usual prudence and sagacity in keeping out of scrapes. George had warned Piers, he wrote to us, of the danger of lingering. But that one commission Piers had said he must execute. And so the fatal day overtook him. And he was detained, it seemed probable, near Madame's former home, not

far from Port Royal des Champs, whither he had gone to make one more search for the Curé, who might, it was thought, be in hiding with some of the faithful among the peasantry.

Madame was, at first, much incensed at the proposition of her Intendant with regard to Claire.

“Poor man!” she said, “to such a degree have these whirlwinds turned the best brains and bewildered the most loyal hearts. But the great-nephew, insufferable young man! I suppose he would think it a condescension to endow my daughter with the remnant of the property of which they have despoiled our house.”

“But, Maman,” said Claire, “it is not said that the young man entertains the thought: at least let us exonerate him!”

“What can you know, my innocent child? Of course I do not suspect any young persons of taking such an affair into

their own hands. This at least, the duty of parents to provide suitable marriages for their children, the Revolution has not changed. From such disorganization France is yet preserved."

Yet, now and then she returned to the Intendant's scheme.

"Perhaps pride is after all the sin which has brought down our order," she said one day to Claire. "M. l'Intendant seems to have spoken deferentially and loyally; and as you say, the young man is not to be blamed. And if his mother were, indeed, of good blood! The poor great-uncle is fond, no doubt; but he says the young man is beautiful, let us hope also good. The family were always devout."

But, at this point, Claire, regardless of consistency, entirely abandoned the defence of the beautiful young man.

"M. Piers writes that he is an upstart, a 'dandy,'" said she.

“Ah, my child! the English have ideas a little different from ours. Those fine manners which we used to cultivate are not to their taste. And now, they say, they are not cultivated even in France. How could they, the root being cut away? On the whole, perhaps, it does not speak badly for a young man that he should in these republican days have manners an Englishman might think too elaborate.”

“My mother!” Claire replied, “I think M. Piers would judge well of manners.”

“No doubt, my child. For England, the Danescombes have excellent manners. And what has my poor child known better? I have been unjust to thee, my Claire. I should have accepted the Countess of Abbot’s Weir’s invitation for thee; then thou wouldst have seen the world. What should have been *thy* world; as far indeed as that can exist anywhere out of France; anywhere in the world, now.”

“Unjust to me!” said Claire, “my mother! Never. Would I have left thee? But let us not be unjust to any who have been good to us. M. Piers went—is detained—for us, mother.”

“It is true, my child; I weep for him, I pray for him, night and day. The most generous heart! But, for thee? I cannot always be with thee. Sometimes I feel as if every day were breaking some of the few threads that keep my body here. And before I go, I would fain do my duty for thee, if I knew it. M. l’Intendant was a brave and loyal servant always. I spoke hastily of him. God forgive me. I have failed in so much!”

And then the little tender veil of concealment for a moment was laid aside, and the two wept in one another’s arms.

For a little shadow was falling on Claire—a little shadow from one human form; yet, within that shadow, an eclipse of the

sun would, to her, have added little darkness. Slowly, imperceptibly, decay and ruin were creeping on all that made her home, on all that made the world home to her; ruin beside which, when it came, the crash of falling nations, or of falling worlds, would for her have added little tumult.

No longer now so very slowly, or imperceptibly, the stages of declining strength were measured.

From the chair to the couch, from the couch to the bed, from helplessness to helplessness. The steps we all have to tread, unless for us the last descent which leads to the shining upward way, is a precipice.

And then came the keen March winds, penetrating irresistibly through the carefully guarded windows. And then a few days of bewilderment and anguish. And then the difficulty was over; and the mother was perplexed about her duties no more, or the duties of others.

She had been led at last "by the right way to the city of habitation."

She received the last sacraments of her Church.

There was no time for last words or last directions. Bequests there were none to make. Madame had nothing to leave to the world but her Claire, and scarcely anything to leave to Claire but her blessing.

She left her child to God.

And as she breathed out this her last blessing and bequest in one, she smiled at Léontine, and then she looked with a very wistful gaze at Loveday and me.

Then Claire pressed the crucifix to her lips, and breathing the one Name, which is above every name, the only Name for dying lips, the patient chastened spirit passed away.

We thought there was a light on her countenance, as of eyes that had met other eyes, long sought, and in one glance had understood all that had perplexed.

We knew that the patient, mourning, lowly, purified spirit was blessed at last with all the beatitudes, comforted, satisfied, seeing God.

Satisfied also for us, even for her child. And now, Claire also had to learn the old lesson of my childhood, to follow the motherly eyes "up to His face."

And being sweeter and more trustful than I, she learned her lesson sooner and better.

She was different from me ; more reasonable, more disciplined, and also more able to take comfort in little things, refusing no crumb of comfort, no ray of light, from any side.

Sometimes I wondered.

To me the feeling in sorrow was—

"My feast of joy has been swept away. I will not refuse the crumbs under the table as sustenance. That would be suicide. But to give thanks at the empty table for the

crumbs, and pretend to say grace as for the feast, that would be servile, false. And I will not try. I will mingle ashes with my bread, and my drink with weeping. God is a Father, my Father, the Father. He will understand."

But Claire, even in this sorrow which cleft her tender heart, as well I knew, was still like a guest at a king's table. It seemed to me as if the old habits of her high breeding went through her soul, and pervaded her religion.

She would not fail in any gracious form of courtesy because her heart was breaking, any more than her mother when her life was ebbing; not even, if I may say so, with God.

She opened her windows literally and symbolically to the sunshine. She spread the little white tables with the primroses her mother had delighted in. She kept the room fair and pleasant, as if her mother

were on a journey, and she had expected her home. And yet her dear brown eyes were often dim and red with weeping.

“The good God thought it worth while to make the primroses this spring,” said she, “and should I fail to show Him I see, and care, and am grateful? And then *she* cared, Bride. She cared so much ! although she has so much that is fairer and better to care for now.”

“When I can give thanks, Bride, and be a little glad, I know I am feeling a little as she is feeling now. But,” she added, with a sudden burst of weeping, “I cannot ; I cannot always ! Only then I hope God is making something deeper in my heart, that by-and-by there may be more room, and I may be able to feel even more as she is feeling, yes, always more and more.

CHAPTER V.

THE seizure of the ten thousand English in France roused the nation from John o'Groat's House to the Land's End. At last England set herself resolutely against the stream, regardless who pulled with her.

From that time till the end of the war, twelve years afterwards, whatever some factious men might write about the futility of opposing Buonaparte and his "invincibles," and however a feeble policy might reduce the war to "neat and ineffective expeditions," the nation went heart and soul into the conflict, her spirit keeping firm in victory, and rising with defeat.

For twelve years we felt ourselves, every man of us, one Nation, and a nation stand-

ing alone, for all nations, for all the kingdoms of the world, against one devouring Universal Empire. As long as England stood, Napoleon could not assume the coveted title of "Emperor of the West."

The symbols of the Hebrew prophets and of the Apocalypse came into men's minds in those days as no oriental hyperbole, but the natural and only adequate description of what was happening through Europe during those terrible years.

Poor young Emmett, the Irish rebel, requested a reprieve of a few days to finish his pamphlet "on the near approach of the Millennium."

"Wild beasts which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with their feet," seemed the most obvious representation of the nations, at least of that one nation, which, having cast off homage to her king and faith in her God, now crouched

under the power, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly," which, springing "from the sand of the sea," from the dust of the earth, from nothing, made war with kings and subdued them, made war against "the host of heaven" and "cast the stars down from their places."

It is difficult at this distance, even for us who remember, to revive in our minds the preternatural terror that surrounded the name of Buonaparte. Why should it be deemed incredible that he should attain any height of power, the Corsican lawyer's son, the young artillery officer, whom emperors had become proud to call brother, who disposed of thrones to his kindred or his generals?

How could it be deemed incredible that he should commit any crime, who, as we all believed, had murdered the young Duc d'Enghien at midnight; who had caused Pichegru to be strangled in one prison, and

Toussaint L'Ouverture to be starved with cold and hunger in another; who massacred his prisoners in Syria, and shot six thousand Russians kneeling helpless on the ice; who, when thousands of his own men fell, shuddered a little at the blood-stains on the white uniform they happened to be wearing, and as a remedy commanded "only blue uniforms" in future; who never hesitated at a falsehood or a slaughter; and for what object? The glory of France? He was not even a Frenchman. His own supremacy? No man disputed it. It was little wonder if to some he seemed an incarnation of some preternatural power without human heart or conscience, and without human limitations; so swift, so unable to rest, so invincible in destruction, so unable, it seemed, to do anything but destroy.

Three successive Augusts he fixed his camp at Boulogne, gazing menacingly across at our white cliffs,—and gathering his hun-

dred thousand around him to cross the sea and assail us.

In the first August, 1803, England answered him by enrolling her three hundred thousand volunteers, to avenge her ten thousand *détenus*, and to meet the hundred and twenty thousand veterans at Boulogne.

We laughed at ourselves and our voluntary Defenders, freely, as the custom of our country is. Every town had its jokes against itself and its citizen soldiers (the old butt of wits from time immemorial), the cut of their uniforms, or the handling of their arms; and Abbot's Weir was not behind the rest. I remember well old stories of the heroic valour with which our gallant volunteers went forth with fife and drum to encounter a reported outbreak of prisoners of war, and finding the enemy to be nothing but certain white stones set to mark the road across the moors, returned safe but inglorious. And again, how on occasion of

some review by some distinguished officer of the line, the manœuvres signally failed in consequence of the bugleman having blown a quid of tobacco into his bugle.

We laughed at each other, and grumbled at the powers that be, as our wont is; believing in each other and obeying the powers that be all the time, in that inconsistent manner which amuses us, and perplexes and sometimes misleads our neighbours not a little.

Not a groat did the Government pay, or would any Englishman accept for uniforms, arms, or time.

Meantime, Mr. Pitt, still kept out of what most of us felt was his place at the head of the nation, was living at Walmer, commanding volunteers. Great drillings were going on throughout the land, in town market-houses, on village greens. Dibdin's songs were sung everywhere, and old Scotch ballads were revived. "Scots wha hae with

Wallace bled, Scots wha Bruce has often led," fraternising with "Britons who never would be slaves."

It was an uneasy time for Quakers. To be a man of peace meant to most of us little less than to be a traitor.

How much did it all mean?

Disciplined, and under able leadership, it meant something at Trafalgar, in the Peninsular War, and at Waterloo.

Buonaparte never obtained a chance to prove what it would have meant on our own shores. It meant, at least, that the nation felt herself a nation; and that every atom of the body politic had become for the time an atom multiplied by the sum of the whole. It meant that we all knew there was something worth infinitely more than money; and, many of us, that there is something worth more than life.

Once more the eloquent words of Sir James Mackintosh, the Advocate of Peltier,

in the “declaration of the merchants, bankers, traders of London,” rang through the land. “We deem it our duty solemnly to bind ourselves to each other and to our countrymen, that we will employ all our exertions to rouse the spirit, and to assist the resources of the kingdom ; that we will be ready with our services of every sort in its defence ; and that we will rather perish together than live to see the honour of the British name tarnished, or that noble inheritance of greatness, glory, and liberty destroyed, which has descended to us from our forefathers, and which we are determined to transmit to our posterity.”

On the 2nd of August, 1804, when Buonaparte came to threaten us the second time from Boulogne with his myriads, and his flat-bottomed boats, the pomp of his ceremonial was more splendid than at first. He had been decreed to be Emperor by the Senate on the 18th of May ; and his

Josephine was Empress. In form, nothing was wanting to the dramatic representation of the Roman invasion. The imperial throne was set up on the coast, the legions paid homage around.

But on that same 18th of May, the Englishman we acknowledged as our chief had his hand once more on the helm.

William Pitt was Prime Minister of England once more.

Our little world at Abbot's Weir, indeed, had its separate shadows and eclipses. But hope was strong in us. We had a conviction, Claire and I, that the world must brighten again, simply because we were young. And I always thought Pitt and Nelson were about to finish the war, and set Piers free.

In one respect Claire and I had drawn nearer each other.

After much thought Claire had decided to

attend our church. She thought the religion which made England what it was, must be stronger and truer than that which had either made or left France what it was ; that the Church which fearlessly gave the Bible to the people, and the Faith which laid hold throughout the land, not only on the hearts of gentle women to sweeten them, but of rough men, to change and save them, which made freedom and loyalty possible together, could not have wandered far from their divine source. Perhaps, also, Léontine and her Huguenot faith had unconsciously influenced her, and that century of persecution which had robbed France of her noblest ; certainly, Loveday and all she had seen in her. However it came about, so it was, that one Sunday morning she walked quietly across the market-place with Léontine, and asked if she might sit in our pew. And that Easter she received the Sacrament, kneeling between

my father and me under the old altar window.

“If this is indeed the best I could do,” she said to me afterwards, as we walked across the pleasant Leas where Piers and I used to stroll on Sunday afternoons, “my mother and yours would be glad, Bride. And I think it is. And I think they are.”

She had always a strange sense, for one so buoyant, of the transitoriness of this life, and its continuity with the next. Perhaps her old Catholic training had helped her to it, linking the living and the dead, by more unbroken ties, than some forms of Protestantism. Perhaps, also, the convulsions which had desolated her country and her home. I always felt that to me life was in some sense more solid, to her more liquid; to me as the firm land which could only be parted by earthquakes, to her as the waves of a changing sea for ever heaving and

parting, whilst bearing us on to the invisible shore.

She spoke of death more easily than I could ; more as one of "the incidents of life," as one of its separations, and not always the worst.

Now and then little letters came to us from Piers, quite cheerful, insisting that he was not wasting his time, that he was quite well treated, was earning his living, and gaining valuable experience.

In the first he sent a message to Madame, very reticent and deferential, but not very bright as to the state of her property, although the *ci-devant* intendant was preparing, he hoped, to send her some remittances.

In the second, having heard of Madame's death, all his reticence was gone. He poured out all his heart to me about Claire. If I thought there was any chance of her caring for him, I was to tell her now ; in-

ferior in rank and position, in everything, as he was, he loved her. He was sure I must know; he almost thought she must know. He almost feared she must know so well that she could not care for him, or he should have known that she did. And if she did not, could not ever care, I was not to breathe a word, but to be as a sister to her always. He was sure our father would care for her as a child. But if only there *could* be the *right* to do it, &c., &c.

And I told our father; and quite simply he went to Claire. And so the perplexities and uncertainties were over. And Claire became our very own, and wrote, herself, a few words to Piers, only a few, because it was so doubtful if they would reach him. She said it was for her he had become a prisoner, and it was but his due. But the little letter did reach him, and seemed to be as satisfactory to him as a volume.

Thenceforth they corresponded, and those

letters which I never saw wonderfully lightened the separation, even to me ; they made Claire so happy, that the reflected light gave me faith in its source, through all the darkness of absence. Probably, moreover, the separation by seas and continents lightened the other separation between the brother and sister, which must have come for me ; when, however, the love might continue, the whole weight of his heart's confidence and care came to rest on another.

I seemed to gain a sister in Claire before I parted with anything of a brother to Piers's bride.

Moreover, this betrothal, which my father wished to be known at once, had an unforeseen effect on the relations between Amice and her grandmother.

One morning when I was tying sweet-peas on the upper terrace of our garden, to my wonder and joy, Amice herself came out from the Aladdin's-lamp-like door of the

little subterranean passage, and walked up the steep slope. I was too surprised even to run and meet her. The "honour due," as I knew Amice felt, to Madam Glanvil, had so sealed my lips, and made me shrink from anything like a clandestine interview.

We shook hands and kissed, without any extra demonstrations, as if we had only parted yesterday. Indeed we had lived together all the time, although it was a year since we had met, because, whatever happened, I knew always what Amice was thinking and feeling about it. And Amice was at all times rather like a boy, as Piers used to say, or rather like her grandmother, as to demonstration of feeling.

"*Granny sent me !*" said she, with a dry little smile. "She said to me this morning at breakfast, when Cato and Cæsar had left us—

"'Child ! with all your patience and submission, you are as proud as any Glanvil

of them all; and that is the only excuse for you. If you had been humble enough to fret, and cry, and rage a little like other girls, it would all have been over months ago. I feel for Bride Danescombe. Why have you shut her out from Court all this time? Of course, you might have known I did not mean it.'

"Of course I made no apology or self-defence. And she continued—

"‘I hope you are the better for the silence. I believe I am. But some one must begin to speak. And as I am deaf, and most used to speaking, I suppose it must be me. What is this about Piers Danescombe?’

"I told her of the engagement with Claire.

"‘Very ridiculous,’ she said, but she looked pleased. ‘The boy a prisoner, and the girl a beggar. However, it is better than your poor Great Aunt Prothessea and her Elder. If one is to fight any one, or

love any one, but an Englishman, it had better be a Frenchman. It seems more natural. One's ancestors hundreds of years ago might have done the same. Besides, it is rather a chance we Glanvils did not stay in Normandy, and then we might all unfortunately have been French. There are only two nations, after all, of really old family, the French and ourselves. The rest of them are children, parvenus, savages just civilised. Who had ever heard of Russia when the Glanvils came over with the Conqueror, or of Prussia, or even of Austria? Then, besides, I don't like this partition of Poland. Not that I think much of the Poles. But we got over our little pilferings in the dusk, before history began, we old nations and old families. It is discreditable to be caught doing these things in the daylight.'

"I suggested that the Hohenstaufen and the Hohenzollern were not altogether of

new blood, and that the Holy Roman Empire was rather ancient.

“‘Hohenstuff and Holy Roman nonsense,’ said Granny irreverently, not believing in history or in foreign languages; ‘that little French thing is not a Roman, at all events, I am glad to see by her coming every Sunday to church. You may have her here with Bride Danescombe.’

“‘But Granny,’ I said, ‘do not talk to her about things Roman, or English and French.’

“‘Do you think that I do not know how to talk to young women in love? I was in love myself once, and am not such a monster after all,’ said Granny; ‘and,’ she added parenthetically, as she rose from table, ‘by the way, I have been thinking a good deal. And as to packing the negroes in ships, perhaps John Wesley was right. Not that I think any better of the blacks,’ she concluded, ‘not a bit of it; nor of the

Methodists. An idle, incorrigible, chattering set, all of them. They may do each other what good or harm they can for me.'

"Which was Granny's form of adhesion to the abolition of the slave-trade, and the toleration of missionaries in the plantations."

"Claire always said 'the discipline of silence' would work well," I said, "and it certainly has."

"So," said Amice, with her little dropping of laughter, "I have lost my only chance of 'the red rose' of martyrdom, Bride, and am obliged to be as prosperous as your friends at Clapham, and do all my good works to the music of silver trumpets, in the sunshine. At least until I can get to my poor negroes myself. But oh, Bride," she said, her eyes moistening and her whole dear face radiant, "all this means so much, so much, for Granny! And do you know she told me I might have the servants in

for family prayer. 'And a chapter from the Bible, or a Psalm, if you like,' she said. 'Not too long, and take care that it is out of the Lessons. I will not have any separatist rambling about the Bible wherever you choose. And a prayer out of a book. No ranting. One or two of the collects will do.' And she concluded by saying, 'I think we might have the Confession. The Confession is very suitable. I have been saying it over often lately, and I hope it has done me a little good.' "

CHAPTER VI.

FOR two years our island was islanded as it had scarcely been before. The Continent was closed to our travellers. Few foreigners entered England, except reluctantly, as exiles or prisoners of war. Yet it so happened that our little world of Abbot's Weir was widened instead of being narrowed by the exclusion.

One of the prisons of war was placed among the bleak moorlands not far from us, where bogs and wild ranges of lonely hills made approach difficult, and escape, for a foreigner, almost impossible.

Our hearts ached often for the men torn from pleasant France to drone away the prime of life within those cheerless walls.

The Latin inscription over the gates,

“PARCERE SUBJECTIS,”

must have read like a mockery to many who entered them.

However, with the buoyancy of their race, the French prisoners made the best of their circumstances, kept up each other's spirits by tale and chanson, carved delicate toys out of bones, twisted chains, bracelets, and ornaments out of hair, thought it worth while even in that depth and darkness to make the depth and darkness as light and as tolerable as they could.

With the Americans, men of our own race, who were brought there afterwards, it was different. They drank the cup to the dregs, as those of our race are apt to do, scorning small alleviations, refusing comfort.

Some of us console ourselves by saying that it is the nobler animals, to which freedom is as the breath of life, which beat

their wings against the cage and break their hearts against the inevitable; that it is the very energy which makes our race strong against remediable ills, which renders them desperate beneath the irremediable.

Yet the creatures who sing in their cages have surely also their merit and their strength. It takes at least as much courage to sing away despair, as to beat against the prison-bars.

Patience has its manly heroism as well as its feminine beauty, is a "virtue" as well as a grace; and certainly it takes a larger weight of Christianity to make us patient than some of our neighbours.

Claire naturally made the French prison her "parish;" she and Léontine knitting and sewing warm clothes for them, and doing what was more difficult to her, making "quêtes" in all directions for money to help her compatriots, whether in the form of direct alms, or purchase of their wares.

In this good work she found a fervent supporter in a young French naval officer, Captain Godefroy, who was taken in one of the earliest naval engagements, and sent to Abbot's Weir on parole.

I cannot say the French officers were admitted without precautions into our homes. Military men in general were in matrimonial respects not popular among our sober-minded townsfolk. And French soldiers were certainly not regarded as the least perilous to feminine hearts.

But Captain Godefroy was altogether an exception. In the first place he was not a soldier but a sailor, which in itself was something of a passport to our insular natures; in the second he was not a "Papist" but a Protestant; in the third, he was not gay, or debonnaire, or fascinating, or "French," according to any type we recognised. In the last place (really in the last) he was a man of some property,

and had remittances, and paid his debts most rigidly. And so he soon became quite domiciled among us.

Even Madam Glanvil invited him.

I was at Court when she first mentioned him. She had seen him at church on Sunday.

“Who is that fine, sad-looking man,” said she to Amice, “in a French naval uniform, who sat in the free seats yesterday? He ought not to sit in the free seats. He is a gentleman. Ask him into ours. Or stay! the vicar might have him. I will speak to the vicar. He was quite an example, so grave and devout, never looked at any one; quite an example, especially as, of course, he could not understand a word of what was going on.”

But Amice said hastily, “He does understand English.”

“What is his name?” asked Madam Glanvil.

Amice did not know.

“Very strange you should know he knows English, and yet not know his name,” said her grandmother.

“I know he understands English, because he asked me a question at our gate, and understood my answer. But of course I had no necessity or right to ask his name.”

“What did he ask ;” said Madam Glanvil, “and at which gate?”

“The gate at the end of the wood, Granny,” said Amice, “on the road to the moor. You know it is the limit of the parole for the French prisoners.”

“I know no such thing. A very accommodating rule for us !” said Madam Glanvil, grimly. “I should recommend the French prisoners, as a rule, to walk the other way. There are three other roads. And I have no desire to have foreigners prowling about our cottages,

among the maidens and the hens. Frenchmen eat eggs by the dozen, and no doubt think all fair in love and war."

Amice laughed, but her colour rose a little. She was not given to "flush and blush" as her grandmother accused me of doing.

"If you wish him to sit in our pew, Granny," said she, "you had better clear your mind first as to the eggs, or perhaps you might not enjoy saying the responses to the Commandments together."

"But all this time you have never told me what he asked. Why cannot you tell plainly at once?"

"I can and will," said Amice. "There is hardly anything to tell. It is a very short story. I was coming up out of the wood, and he stood at the gate with one of Honor Rosekelly's grandchildren on his shoulder. He took off his hat, and, with a very serious look, begged my pardon for

speaking. The little creature looked quite at home with him. And the grave, sad look went out of his face when he spoke to her. He said he had found the little maid crying bitterly in the road for mammy; she seemed to have lost her way, and could only point up the lane beyond the gate, "which," he said, with a slight momentary smile, "involved him in a case of conscience, between charity and truth, the gate being the furthest limit permitted to his parole."

"Well, what did you do?"

"What could I do, Granny, but take the child from him, and carry it to old Honor's cottage myself?"

"No, poor fellow! You were very clever to understand him," said Madam Glanvil. "No doubt he has a wife and children of his own at home. Those sailors always marry early. I will invite the vicar, and Mr. Danescombe and his wife,

and ask him to meet them. You should write at once, if I could only find out the name. And you can ask the little French girl. She will be somebody for him to speak to," concluded Madam Glanvil, unmoved as to her conviction of the impossibility of a foreigner speaking English in any intelligible manner.

"His name is Godefroy," I said, "Captain Hervé Godefroy. His family is from Normandy."

"Normandy!" said Madam Glanvil. "Almost as good as a cousin. I have no doubt his forefathers fought side by side with ours. Poor fellow! pity they did not come over with us. His wife and children must be very sorry now, that they stayed behind."

And so Madam Glanvil, having provided Captain Godefroy with suitable domestic ties, and almost proved to her own satisfaction that he was scarcely a Frenchman

at all, broke down her usual rule of exclusion; and the young French officer obtained the *entrée* to Court.

And so, as my selfish heart cried out at first, my Amice was stolen away from me. And so, as love learned in the end, our Amice found the fulfilment of her life, and gave us Hervé Godefroy, and Hervé Godefroy gave her back to us worth tenfold all she had been before.

Madam Glanvil herself fell straightway into grandmotherly love for the young man.

He had a grave and tender deference for her, which brought out all the high breeding that belonged of right to her gentle blood. With him her manners took a sweet, old-fashioned, stately courtesy which surprised those who did not know that her eccentricities were but a crust underneath which lay, not only a generous heart, but a fine old polish, inwrought, as in her old oaken furniture, from the use of cen-

turies. It was a pleasant sight to see him kiss her hand, the tender gravity with which he paid, and the lofty yet half shy grace with which she received the homage. The first time, I remember a faint blush came on the fine, fair, proud, old face, and gave one a vision of what it must have been before the strong lines of age, and of habitual care and command had stamped it. She said Captain Godefroy had evidently had a gentleman for his father, and a gentlewoman for his mother. Her courtesy entirely checked, as regarded him, the peremptory inquisition to which she subjected most people. She did not even ask him about the wife and little children with whom she had endowed him. She thought it might be too painful for him to speak of them.

Indeed there was a kind of gravity and loftiness about the young French officer which prevented Abbot's Weir in general

from gratifying its curiosity by direct questioning, and therefore left a large margin around him for legends and myths on which any light thrown by casual revelations of his own, was welcomed, and multiplied into a hundred prisms.

Not that he made any mysteries about himself. No man could be more frank and straightforward. Intrusive curiosity he was certainly capable of baffling. But in general he was simply unaware that people cared to know about him. Reticent he naturally was. It had, moreover, not been the habit of the men of the "religion" in France to talk much about themselves.

The Protestants of France had passed through a two hundred years' "discipline of silence," living all that time deprived of utterance in public assemblies or in books,—by their very firesides watched by spies and invaded by dragonnades. The discipline had not been without fruit. It had

not deprived them of the rapid and acute eloquence which belongs to their nation ; but it had pruned from them the habit of boastful and superfluous speech. There had been little temptation to them to speak of what were their true glories, the gibbet, the stake, the wheel, the galleys, the massacred congregations, the violated hearth, encountered for truth and for God.

My father from the first had taken greatly to him. They had had many hopes and many *désillusionnements* in common. And to Madam Glanvil he spoke freely. To all aged people his manner had a deference which was much more than manner. He believed in the venerableness of old age.

And there was a clear ring in his rich tenor voice, and a distinctness in his measured and slightly foreign accent which always made his words intelligible to a deafness, as we knew of old, always a little arbitrary and discriminating.

And Amice, during these dialogues, took in a highly feminine way to knitting ; now and then interposing with a low word in response to an appeal of his, and always constituting to him the chief part of the audience.

And I sat sometimes, and listened too, and watched my darling—my heroine's heart being won ; at first, as it seemed, from me, but afterwards, as I learned, for me and for all.

His father was of an old family of Norman gentlemen. Not sixty years before, in Normandy, six hundred Protestants of the generation of his father and grandfather had escaped from a fresh outburst of persecution, happily the last on a national scale. Their homes had been broken into at night by officers of the king's archers accompanied by the curés of the parish, and their children, especially their young daughters, seized from them with cruel

sabre-cuts and blasphemies, to be thrust into convents, there to be taught the Roman Catholic religion at the expense of their parents. Happily that district was near the sea-coast, and the mid-day of the eighteenth century was nearly reached; and so the last large emigration of Protestant refugees escaped better than most of their forefathers.

“Pity,” Madam Glanvil said, “your father had not been among those exiles, you would then have been fighting on our side.”

Captain Godefroy’s mother was a Guiton; —a descendant of the family of the brave Mayor Guiton, who held starving La Rochelle so long against the king’s forces.

“Ah!” Madam Glanvil admitted, “I have always been sorry at my heart for that business of La Rochelle. I have often heard of it. One of my own ancestors was an officer of the fleet sent out with the succours

which never reached the besieged; I fear were never meant to reach. A bad business. His Majesty had bad advisers, and but too faithful servants. It nearly drove our family over to the wrong side. If it had not been for the civil wars and Oliver Cromwell, and the martyrdom of King Charles, I doubt whether we should have held our politics."

"It was a sad affair for us," Captain Godefroy replied. "It was among our nursery tales how the starving citizens of La Rochelle three times saw, with unutterable grief, the English fleet in the offing, and three times saw—what we had been used to think incredible—England baffled and driven back on her own element."

Amice looked up with one of her bright flashes of intelligence and sympathy.

"Your nursery tales must have been of a high order," she said.

"We had certainly no need to turn to

stories of loup-garous and witches' cauldrons for horrors," he said.

"And little need to turn to Greece and Rome for heroes," she replied.

He smiled one of those rare smiles of his, which came from sources as deep as his sorrows and the courage which bore them.

"We ought to have gained some spiritual muscle," he said, "in pulling two hundred years against the stream."

"You can understand, Madame," he continued, "since you care for our history, how the Revolution, which has proved in many ways such a desolation, seemed to us a deliverance."

This was certainly a little difficult for Madam Glanvil to admit. Except for the amends she felt due for the miscarriage of her ancestors' expedition at La Rochelle, she could scarcely have let it pass."

"Time was beginning to set things right before the Jacobins took it in hand,"

she said, grimly. "And some of your forefathers were not altogether without turbulence."

"For a hundred years," he replied, "we had many rich, and many noble among us, and we fought for our rights. Would you have had it otherwise?" he asked, not without stratagem, for Madam Glanvil would certainly not have done otherwise. If her theories were for non-resistance, her sympathies were undoubtedly with those who resisted.

"Little good came of it," she said, evasively, applying to her snuffbox.

"So, many of us felt," he replied. "After 1685, the year of the Revocation, we were poor, and for the most part of lowly station, like the Apostles. Our rich men had escaped to enrich England and Germany. Our nobles were exiles. Some of them, Madame, did fight, not ignobly, in your armies. Our congregations assembled in

deserts and caves, at the risk of fusillades. Our pastors were consecrated, as they knew, to the 'vocation of martyrdom.' But our pastors preached submission, and our people, for the most part, to the utmost limit of endurance (the rising of the Cevennes being ended), practised it."

Amice had laid aside her work, and was gazing far away.

"I weary you with my old histories," he said softly.

"No," she said; "I was only thinking of the West Indian slaves. If some of your people could have taught them the lessons of patience, they would have come with force from such lips."

He paused.

"You have West Indian property?" he said earnestly. "In St. Vincent a plantation was left to me. Once I wished to take charge of it, and prevent some of the evils there; and afterwards I often regretted I

had not. I thought I had missed my vocation. But scarcely lately," he added, as if to himself.

This little interlude took place in very rapid words, whilst Madam Glanvil was expressing her divided state of mind by vigorously poking the fire.

"You should have kept to the old track," she said at last. "The pasteurs were wiser than the democrats. Revolution could do nothing for you."

"Not quite nothing," he demurred; "but it promised much. You will remember it is not forty years since in the Catholic churches at Toulouse they celebrated with pomp the anniversary of the St. Bartholomew of the South. It is not forty years since the Pasteur Rochette was hanged, and three gentlemen of Languedoc were beheaded at Toulouse for religion, or since poor old Calas, by long-since-disproved calumny—accused of the murder of his son

for turning Catholic — was broken on the wheel, and took two hours dying. ‘I die innocent,’ he said. ‘Jesus Christ, innocence itself, willed to die by torments yet more cruel.’ The Catholic priests who attended him on the scaffold confessed, ‘Thus in old times died our martyrs.’ Voltaire pleaded for his memory. In three years the sentence was annulled, and fanaticism to that extent was never possible again. At least,” he added sadly, “fanaticism upheld by the Church and the law. The fanaticism of mobs is a hurricane no one can provide against.”

“Léontine says always that all our people die well,” interposed Claire, who happened to be present. “Of our king also, and Madame Elizabeth, may it not be said, ‘Thus in old times died our martyrs?’”

“Ah, mademoiselle,” he replied, “if you could know how eagerly we, who have been so long accustomed to be banished outside

our national history as proscribed outlaws, take up and claim the heroic traditions we have in common with all our countrymen ! To be exiled *in France* as we were, was in some respects harder than to be exiled *from* it. To understand our isolation," he continued, "you must remember it is not thirty years since one of our pastors died in prison for religion, in La Brie. And it is not fifteen years," he concluded, his voice dropping to its deepest tones, and tremulous with feeling, "since all professions were closed to us and all means of livelihood except trade, or farming ; since our marriages were illegal, our children unrecognised as lawful, the rites of Christian burial of our dead forbidden to us. It was only in 1787 that marriage and burial were permitted us. Was it wonderful that we welcomed the dawn of the Revolution ?"

" Ah, monsieur," said tender-hearted

Claire, breaking down into tears, "I wonder at nothing in our poor France. My mother taught me that. Only I like to think that we, of the Catholic noblesse, and our king, did a little to help you before we fell. In 1787, when these your wrongs were redressed, France had still a king and a nobility."

"Nobody doubts that your King Louis was a saint, or fit to be one," Madam Glanvil said; "if he was not a sage."

Madame Glanvil was a little impatient always with tears. Amice had not used her to them. Their race was of the kind from which wrong does not draw tears, but strikes fire; such fire as was at that moment flashing from Amice's eyes.

A little storm was gathering.

Captain Godefroy dispersed it.

"Mademoiselle," he said to Claire, "it was a happy moment for us when the aged Paul Rabaud preached the first sermon in

the first temple granted us, at Nismes; when the women who had faded from youth to grey hairs, in the prisons of Aigues Mortes, were set free. It was a proud moment for us Protestants when Rabaud St. Etienne, himself ordained, at twenty, a pastor of the persecuted Church, grandson of our noble Paul Rabaud, who had been from youth to past middle age a hunted *Pasteur du désert*, was nominated President of the General Assembly of France, and said there to all the nation, ‘My country is free. Let her show herself worthy of liberty by declaring that the very word *tolerance* shall be proscribed—that unjust word which represents religious differences as crimes.’ But it was a moment which touched a deeper chord when the grandson of the persecuted pleaded for the life of the great-grandson of the persecutor. We could not silence the clamours which drowned the dying words of our king. We could only

thank God for him that he died patient, calm, and believing as any of those forefathers of our religion, whose dying words had been similarly silenced long before."

"For me," he resumed, "I have, indeed, hoped too much, from every direction. I hoped from the National Assembly, with Rabaud St. Etienne at its head; I hoped from the Republic; did it not proclaim liberty and brotherhood? I hoped from Napoleon Buonaparte; did he not declare that 'the empire of the law ceases where the empire of conscience begins?' I hoped the old hatreds were to die out between class and class, between faith and faith, between nation and nation. My politics, therefore, are little worth any one's attending to."

"Yet," said Amiee softly, "you would not wish to have hoped less."

"No!" he said; "to hope all and lose all is better, infinitely better, than to hope

nothing and lose nothing. Is not hope itself something?"

So in many a talk by the fireside, in garden and woodland walks, the summers and winters wore on towards 1805. And all the while Amice's life and mine were separating and gathering around different centres.

More and more, the conversation, when we were all together, used to be between Captain Godefroy and Madam Glanvil. With Amice he had reached a certainty of understanding that needed little direct speech.

The different types of their religion, as of their characters, fulfilled each other wonderfully.

With her religion meant forgiveness, love, the forgiving Father, the Incarnate and atoning Son; the loving, healing, softening Spirit; the reconciled, happy, obedient child.

With him it meant power, majesty, truth, justice, the Sovereign to Whom the profoundest loyalty, unlimited self-sacrifice, and unhesitating obedience were due; at Whose lips we were to question nothing, from Whose hand we were to submit to everything, in Whose heart-searching presence a lie was impossible, on Whose awful altar of truth life was a light offering; the soldier sworn, as a matter of course, to die at his post; the subject ready, as a matter of course, to seal his loyalty with life.

His hereditary faith was that masculine Calvinism which has been the religion of so many strong intellects, of so many free nations, and of so many heroic hearts; the faith in a Supreme Will, supreme and unalterably just, which must conquer all wills, must be accepted, at whatever cost to reason or heart, must be obeyed at whatever cost to heart or life; the faith which in men has combined as much of daring and

duty ; in women, of devoutness and heroism ; in nations, of law and liberty, as any in the world.

Amice's faith was rather in the Supreme Love which must conquer all hearts.

Both met, and fulfilled each other's faith in that redeeming Cross where the Divine Love suffered to the utmost for man, and the human will gave itself to the utmost to God.

Both met and fulfilled each other's life in that lifelong service of the oppressed, to which they devoted themselves ; every act and sacrifice of which, God, in giving them to each other, made for them, step after step, from light into fuller light, on and on, as we believe, for ever.

I cannot think or speak of that deep, perfect, ennobling love of theirs, except with the same gravity and reverence as I think of their religion. There were no misunderstandings, no fluctuations, no flashes of

surprise in it. Their hearts were open all through to each other.

And at last, one morning in the winter before the Battle of Trafalgar, Madam Glanvil said to Amice, as Amice was rubbing her chilled feet by her bedroom fire (the old lady went out little now, and grew less arbitrarily deaf, and submitted sometimes to be a little petted and caressed), "I do not think Captain Godefroy has any wife or children, after all."

"I never thought he had, Granny," said Amice.

"I suppose, now, there is no help for it," Madam Glanvil rejoined; "and he may as well continue to come here as before." Which was Madam Glanvil's sanction to Amice's engagement.

And the next day she wore on her finger a chased gold ring, with a sapphire in it, which Captain Godefroy's mother had been used to wear on her wedding finger.

And Captain Godefroy ventured to salute the stately old lady's cheek; whereupon, rising from her high-backed chair (she still scorned an easy-chair), and taking his two hands in hers, she said, "You will understand her better, and be better to her than I have been. She is a good child, but a true Glanvil; perhaps not altogether the worse for that; certainly not the worse for being something besides. I never thought to have given one of our house to a Frenchman. But, after all, we were all Norman once; and it was a chance that your forefathers did not come over with us, or even your father himself in that emigration of the six hundred only sixty years ago. If they had, or he had, there would have been no difficulty; and I do not know that we ought to let a chance like that keep you apart. At all events, I suppose it is too late," she concluded, with a little dry smile, "for an old woman's word to keep you

apart now; you seem to have taken the matter into your own hands. So, I may as well do like the rest of the wise despots, pretend to command by willing what you will."

And so saying, she took Amice's hand also in hers, and held them together one moment, and then, not without some quivering of lips and tottering of limbs, but declining all sympathy or assistance, she left them together, and went slowly up the old oak stairs alone to her chamber.

CHAPTER VII.

MADAM GLANVIL never walked down that old oak staircase again.

Often, afterwards, with the unreasonable self-reproach of love, when death has made love sacred, and unable any more to serve, she would blame herself for not insisting on helping her grandmother up the stairs that night.

“The first time for years and years I had not gone with her, first following as a child, and then, in after years, supporting her, and always waiting for the kiss at the door! Even during the year of our silence—(‘which was indeed my fault,’ she would say, ‘all my fault, all my pride, my ungenerous misunderstanding!’) And not

even to have seen her go up that last evening! In my selfish happiness, taking her at her word, when I ought to have known, and distrusted and disobeyed. She would have been pleased. And I can never do anything to please her more."

Tender trifles of everyday life, little unnoticed habits of love, which at any moment may give a shattering shock to our inmost being, simply by being stopped!

And I, not knowing yet the austere sincerity of grief, would vainly try to excuse and comfort her.

But Hervé Godefroy understood grief, and Amice, better; the truthfulness of her nature, and also the terrible truthfulness of sorrow. And he let her grieve, grieving with her. He knew that such pain cannot be stilled, that the wound must have its anguish, if it is not to mortify, and spread the touch of death throughout the whole being, that so the anguish may work

itself into the whole heart, making it soft and deep and tender, patient and pitiful.

The very night of Amice's betrothal, the blow had come, that direct destruction of power, as if by the benumbing touch of an irresistible hand, without warning or pain, which we call a "stroke."

In the morning, Amice waited some time for her grandmother's appearance (Madam Glanvil having great scorn of aid in her toilet to the last, so that no one ventured to intrude upon her privacy until she rang); until, at last she became alarmed, and rushing up the stairs, knocked softly at the chamber door.

An answer came, gentle and faint; and entering, she found her grandmother unable to move, although her speech was happily unaffected.

Dr. Kenton when summoned thought the case very serious; and he hinted that one

of the gravest symptoms was the—"might he say?—unnatural gentleness and placability of the patient."

But this Amice would not admit. She was persuaded, she told me, though she did not say so to Dr. Kenton, that this gentleness had been growing for some time, and that it was due not to paralysis, but to John Wesley's "*Thoughts on Slavery*," and to the use of the General Confession.

Yet she was not consistent with herself, for when I acquiesced, she burst into tears, and forgetting the moral source to which she had insisted on attributing Madam Glanvil's softened demeanour, she murmured, "Oh, if I could only hear Granny scold us all heartily once more!"

It was a vain wish.

Madam Glanvil retained to the last her objections to "scenes"—to anything melodramatic; otherwise, I believe, she would have found consolation in summoning all

the household (including first of all Cato, and Cæsar, and Chloe), or, indeed, all Abbot's Weir, around her bed, and telling them how hasty and proud she felt she had often been, and how—terrible as it had been at first to lie smitten and helpless,—she felt it happy, at last, to submit and lie low beneath the Hand that had brought her down.

But, as it was, she did nothing but be patient, and said little but to thank everyone for every little kindness,—or now and then, when she thought herself alone, or alone with Amice, which was just the same—to thank God and ask Him not to let her be impatient,—and often to breathe the name of Jesus, and say how much more He had suffered ; Himself once helpless as she was, unable to move hand or foot, but also unable to hide His face from the mocking, prying crowd, while she could still move one arm,—and saw around her nothing but love, and reverence, and pity.

She took no farewells, except only of poor Chloe. And that was the longest confession she made, of sin, or of faith. Taking Chloe's black hand with the one hand she could use, she looked at Amice and said—

“You took good care of her. She will take care of you and yours. I am going where people are not divided into black and white, or into slave or free. All free there. Perhaps one day all free here. You will come, and are sure to be welcomed on the right hand. Forgive me for hasty words, and pray that He may forgive, and that I may not be told to depart. *Saviour of all, make us all free, that we may be free indeed.*”

To which poor Chloe could only reply by sobbing protestations of devotion and gratitude, and assurances that missis would get well, or be sure to have some high place in heaven, far above such as she,

except for what the blessed Lord had done for all alike.

For Chloe had no objection at all to differences of glory in heaven, and could never quite get over a feeling that white people who, having all they could want, and being able to read and write, were humble enough to become Christians, must have some higher reward by-and-by, than black people, who being slaves, and having nothing that they wanted, naturally fled to the pitiful Saviour, as a hunted animal to its covert, because they could not help it.

But when Chloe was led sobbing from the room, she said to Amice—

“She will never live, missie! Poor dear missis! So like a lamb! so sweet and meek! She sees everything too dim, and too clear. No difference between black and white! Poor dear missis, ’tis terrible!—and asking me to pray for her! As if the dear Lord could not hear her better

than me!—me who talk like a baby, and she who talks like a book.”

“God gives the best things to the babes,” Amice said; “and Jesus told us to be like the children. So, pray, Chloe! Pray!”

“Do you think, missie, poor Chloe has got to begin now to pray for poor dear missis? When missis called us lazy brutes and uglier still, need to pray then! But now she so sweet, like a lamb! Nothing to ask, nothing to do, but praise the Lord night and day, and cry like a child.”

Madam Glanvil spoke little, but once again she murmured, “*Thou Saviour of all, make us all free, that we may be free indeed.*” Strangely the simple words struck to Amice’s heart; they were the last in those “*Thoughts of John Wesley on Slavery,*” which her grandmother had once thrown angrily into the fire.

So, all through that summer and autumn

of 1805, the shadow of death lay on the old house at Court, and a high and brave spirit was slowly divesting itself of much that cannot be carried on that lonely journey; having already put away all sense of property, except as a provision for those who are left below, and now laying aside pride, and hard judgment, and much prejudice, that so, when the last step came, nothing might be left but to commend herself, bare and destitute, but redeemed and reconciled, confidingly into the Father's hands.

Following the slowly departing spirit along that silent solemn way, those in the old house had little thought to spare for the tumults in the world around; although, as winds and storms swept and wailed through the woods, and battered and cannonaded the old house with noisy display of force (so feeble compared with the silent foe within), all except the sufferer, knew

too well that a fiercer storm of war and peril was raging around England. The fleets of Nelson and Villeneuve were being tossed and driven by those autumnal gales.

Never, men said, since the Armada threatened England, had her peril been as great as now.

Once more, as we all knew (and for the last time, which we knew not), Napoleon Buonaparte was menacing us on the shores of France, and with him the Grand Army, a hundred and thirty thousand men, with transports ready to convey them. "Give me the command of the Channel for twelve hours," he said, "*et l'Angleterre aura vécu.*" And, meantime, Admiral Villeneuve, who was to give him that command, and Nelson, who was to restrain Villeneuve, were wandering, we knew not where, on the high seas. We only knew that the French fleet had gone to the West Indies, and Nelson after it, with a far inferior force,

which numerical inferiority, however, in itself, gave us little uneasiness.

The first good news we received was that Villeneuve and his ships, driven by Nelson from the West Indies, and then missed by him, had been encountered by Sir Robert Calder, cruising in the Channel, with at least this result of victory, that the French fleets had to abandon the protection of the flotilla intended to transport the invaders, and the Emperor withdrew with the Grand Army to carry on the war in Germany. For which service England, accustomed to naval victories more undeniable, administered in a lofty way rather rebuke than thanks to Sir Robert Calder.

Napoleon had withdrawn. But we were still in uncertainty as to the destination of the French and Spanish Fleets. Nelson, shattered by his harassing pursuit of Villeneuve, was taking his last rest in his

country house, when the news reached him that Villeneuve was safe, in a trap, at Cadiz. The irresistible call of patriotism touched his heart once more. He offered his services to the Admiralty, and, on the 22nd of September, arrived at Portsmouth, to take command of the fleet. Exultation and sorrow were strangely blent through England in that departure ; as, a few weeks afterwards, when

“Home they brought her warrior, dead.”

We heard how the people crowded around him on the shore, not idly gazing, but weeping around him, and even kneeling to implore blessings on him. So he sailed, in the *Victory*, taking his coffin with him, made out of the mast of the *Orient*.

Two days afterwards Buonaparte left Paris for his campaign against Russia and Austria ; and our statesmen began to feel stronger than for many years, believing that they had, at last, secured in the

alliance recently concluded with Austria and Russia a powerful coalition against Napoleon. William Pitt was full of hope in this alliance; but the heart of England rested not so much on his alliances as on himself; on himself, and on Nelson, her two mighty sons; little dreaming that neither of them was to be with us by the new year!

The times were perilous, indeed, for England; but with Pitt and Nelson to think and to fight for us, we felt the world no chaos. Rapidly indeed the thinking and the fighting were wearing out the heart and brain of the two on whom all England was leaning. But this, in those days, we knew not. We had our Atlas and our Hercules; and they did their work cheerily and gallantly, as the heroes do, making little of it; whilst we little thought how heavily the world they bore up was pres-

sing on the shoulders, or that the labours were draining away the life.

On the 21st of October, early in the morning, the long watching by the death-bed at Court was over. The hush of awe had succeeded to the hush of anxious watchfulness.

Amice had sent the weary nurses and servants to rest, and was left alone for awhile beside her dead.

She opened the window, and listened to the flow of the river, and the sweep of the wind through the autumnal woods, and the song of a few robins, calm, autumnal, full of a quiet content, all rapture of love and hope long past. It was the first time she had looked on the outer world for so long! And now it seemed such a long way off, "altogether the *other* world," she said. "*My* world was the spiritual world, the unseen, where *she* had gone,

where the spirit really always dwells, as unseen always as hers now. She was *near*; and God, and our Lord, and the loving Spirit. The woods, the old familiar garden, even the singing birds, were *far away*. I felt it once before, in a measure, when I knelt beside Chloe in the church on the New Year's Eve of the century. The wind, the very sky, so pure and delicate in its morning tints, the birds, flowers, were material, mortal, corruptible. And she and I had always and had still what was incorruptible and faded not away. She has now that *only*. And in those first moments I felt her not *gone*, but brought nearer than ever before."

It seemed a time when barriers were broken down, and veils rent from the top to the bottom. The world grew larger and nearer, the struggling, sinning, suffering world, with God loving it. And then two things came before her like visions.

The French and English fleets, which Hervé Godefroy said he thought must ere long be joined in battle, the human beings, countrymen of hers and of his, fighting and struggling for the mastery, and dying there; and the slaves in the West Indies, men, and women, and children, too surely driven that very morning to their hard, unbroken work with threats and blows. What a chaos, what an arena of wild beasts it seemed! And Granny was at rest beyond it all. But was God really loving all? English and French, slaves and slaveholders? And was dying, indeed, to go and be with Him, with Christ, who had seen the world, and its battles, not from above only, but from *within*, from *beneath*—borne down in the battle, bruised, smitten, slain?

If then God loved the world, those with Him must love the world, and if He could bear to look at it, having created it, and

loved it so much as to give his Son for it ;
so could they.

What then made them able to bear to look on the world, and looking to love it, seeing its evils in all the sweep of the wide horizon without its dimness ; feeling its evils, as those feel a fetid atmosphere who have been all but stifled in it and have escaped from it, and know what pure air is, and breathe freely ?

What makes it possible for any of us to bear the sight of suffering in those dear to us ? What could it be but *hope* ? Hope of healing and purification through suffering ; hope of rescue at any cost for the lost ; hope learned from Him who not only loved the world enough, through all its sinning, to give Himself for it, but hoped for it enough to deem the joy set before Him of saving it from its sin well worth the Cross ?

They through hope able to be pa-

tient; we through patience learning to hope.

What then are they caring for?

In its measure for every conflict, it seemed to Amice, against wrong, and injustice, and oppression *without*.

Supremely, for every conflict against sin and selfishness *within*.

For this terrible European war, then, in its measure, as far as truth and justice are involved in it.

Surely, for the struggle, through English law, against the great wrong of slavery.

Supremely, for the struggle, through Christ's Gospel, against sin and despair *in the slave, and in the master*.

To this last she had consecrated herself five years before; when that high and prejudiced spirit, latterly so cleared and softened, had been the only obstacle to the service. To this, beside that lifeless form, she consecrated herself again, as absolutely

and without reserve what the softened and lowly spirit which but that morning had departed, must now be caring for most on earth. The only obstacle now in her path was the great love which made life so precious.

Should she let that great gift of God be a hindrance to obeying his call?

She made no vow, she only knelt beside the pale, placid, impassive face, and repeated once more the words she had uttered a few hours before, responded to, then, with that gaze, that wistful last gaze not fixed any longer on her, or on anything on earth.

“ Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit ; into Thy hands to guide, mould,—into Thy hands, absolutely, without reserve, to do with me what Thou wilt.”

Then, rising, she went down-stairs.

It was daylight now, though not in

the darkened house. She went into the dining-room, and at the sight of the high old empty chair, daily life came back to her, with the new great blank, and the reality of the greater blank and sacrifice before her, yet. She had not been there long when Hervé Godefroy came.

And as he drew her to him, through her tears, she said at once, not daring to delay—

“The only obstacle duty placed in the way of that great duty you and I have recognised so long is gone. Tell me, what shall I do? You come of a race long used to give up its best to God. Strengthen me to do what I ought.”

It was evidently no new effort to him to measure what that duty might cost.

For, holding both her hands in his, and pressing them against his heart, and looking down into her tearful eyes, he said—

“The like sacrifices were required of us

for generations. But with us it was the women that risked their dearest, and the men only themselves. I see now how much greater their sacrifice than ours."

"You see I must go," she said, "and soon."

Then she led him up into the chamber of death. For a few moments they stood together there. And then, as they stood again together by the fireside, beside the stately old empty chair, he said—

"I see, my love; I know. We will go, in spirit at least, not apart but together. Our life here is but a moment of our life. And, whatever the moment be, the *life* shall be together, for Him and with Him for ever."

They did not speak of her return. That hope was too precious, and too precarious to utter.

And thenceforth their only thought was how to lighten the separation to each other.

So that first day of death passed at the old darkened house at Court; not altogether dark; a day of death, but a day of duty fulfilled, of victory won.

And, all the time, that terrible day of victory and of death was wearing away at Trafalgar.

There, Nelson, smitten to death for England, was still inspiring Englishmen to victory. Wounded to death by a shot from a ship his humanity had twice spared, supposing she had struck, his face lighted up through all his agony, as cheer after cheer from his crew announced that another French or Spanish ship had surrendered.

Duty, not glory, was the glorious mark he had set before his men; sacrifice of self for England, let England's recognition of the sacrifice be what it might.

And at the last he thanked God that he had done that duty; not more; only

“that which was his duty to do ;” his country had a right to all ; not more than duty, but he hoped *not less*.

Weeping from end to end when she heard it, England responded that he had ; scarcely able to smile, as he had smiled in dying, at the victory he had won for her ; since he who had won it was dead.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE winter months that followed were dark indeed for us all ;—in the world of England, in our little world at Abbot's Weir.

The news of the surrender of the Austrian General Mack at Ulm, with his thirty thousand, had reached England more than a fortnight before that of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar ; and had struck the other great Englishman on whom we leaned, to the heart. Trafalgar seemed to make it yet possible for him to live. He struggled hard for life, and was often sanguine of recovery. But from the tidings of the union of the Russian and Austrian armies with Napoleon's, and of the coalition of

Austerlitz, he never revived. The fatal news came to him in December, and in little more than a month—on the 23rd of January, 1806—the great Minister, William Pitt, lay dead in his house at Putney. He was scarcely fifty years old. His friend Mr. Wilberforce said, “He died of a broken heart,”—broken for love of England.

The last words we knew him to have uttered—“*My country ; oh my country !*”—rang like a death-wail throughout the land.

They had done their duty bravely, to the death, for England, those two Englishmen. Better loved, the country could never be again ; nor more fearlessly and disinterestedly served.

We had great names still,—Collingwood, and Charles Fox ; and one we knew not yet, fighting and making order for us, far away in India. But these seemed to most of us in those days of mourning but of the second rank.

The heroes were gone, we thought, as men have thought so often. We had good and brave men left, but those whom we had lost had been something more.

Amice was in London by the end of December. She had gone to stay at Clapham, with her cousins, the Beckford-Glanvils; the present possessors of Court; to consult them about the arrangements for the property, and about her expedition to the West Indies.

Thus by war, and death, and absence, our little circle had dwindled sadly.

Piers still in that French village near Claire's old home; and for many months not a word of tidings from or about him. Dick Fyford, wounded at Trafalgar, and slowly making his way home; Amice away preparing to go to the West Indies, for no one knew how long; and Captain Godefroy, certainly not present with us in spirit;

there was great need that we should “serrer les rangs,” thinned as they were, and press closer to each other, if we were to “press forward” at all. Which, while we live, has to be done, and therefore *can* be done—always.

The Sunday-school especially occupied us. My father himself had undertaken Piers’s class of boys. He could not bear to see anything Piers had begun languish or fall. He went to his Sunday task very meekly, and with a strong sense of his poverty in didactic power and dogmatic definitions, but as regularly as he went to his daily business, the business in which he missed Piers at every turn. I believe (so strong was the Paganism lurking under our Christian faith) that we should all have felt it ominous, like the unaccountable stopping of a watch, if any machinery set in motion by Piers had stopped. Whatever was laid aside, everything connected with

him must be made to prosper. How deeply it used to go to my heart to see the dear grey head bending down among the boys ; the teacher being quite as much in awe of them as they of him !

My impression was, that, as with us of old, he did not directly inculcate much, but drew out what his scholars thought and felt, making them give shape to many a vague thought, and unfolding many a repressed feeling, leading them unconsciously to plough and water their own ground ; and then dropping in seed ; very little seed, and often unperceived in its sowing, but none the less taking root, springing up after many years.

And when he felt his poverty deepest, he had recourse to the "Pilgrim's Progress," or occasionally to portions of "Robinson Crusoe," which never failed to interest them all, and make them children together, teacher and taught.

Claire meanwhile prospered greatly with Amice's infant class.

Moreover, our Sunday-school began to *grow* in many directions; for one, in the direction originally foreseen by the dames. The instruction of the week had to be brought more up to the level of the instruction of the Sundays. And it was seriously in my father's contemplation—which meant, seriously on the eve of fulfilment,—that Abbot's Weir should have a week-day school on the Lancastrian system, combined with some hints from Pestalozzi.

Thus were the most desponding Cassandras among the Dames justified.

It was quite a serious battle. The French Reign of Terror was little more than a decade behind us. And my father was now proposing a measure even more revolutionary than any which had called forth accusations of sedition and atheism against

Mrs. Hannah More. He proposed what she earnestly disclaimed, in a letter to one of her bishops. He actually proposed to teach the youth of Abbot's Weir—the youth of both sexes and all conditions—to *write*.

In vain Mrs. Danescombe warned, and Miss Felicity threatened. "The pen would banish the housemaid's broom, would supersede the spade, the plough, the needle. In the next generation there would be no more maid-servants, washer-women, laundresses, or sempstresses."

"The men would write love-letters whilst the sheep were straying and the crops unsown; the maids would respond while the kettle was boiling over and the linen in rags. A deluge of correspondence would sweep away all honest work, and level all social distinctions."

"Mrs. Danescombe and Miss Felicity might not live to see it—they trusted not

—nor poor dear Mr. Danescombe, who had opened the dykes,—on him, charity might hope that day of ruin might not dawn. On the one hand, Voltaire and Tom Paine and Jean Jacques Rousseau pouring in, through the sacrilegious breach of reading; on the other, sedition and heresy, envy, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness,—and ‘love-making’ pouring out through the breach of writing! Our poor brave soldiers and sailors might as well give up the contest. Napoleon’s army might be recalled from Boulogne, and his fleets lost at Trafalgar. But for England all was over. Over her it might indeed be written ‘England has lived.’”

Such were some of the murmurs of that stream against which, nevertheless, we pulled, not without success, though certainly not with the result of such a deluge of knowledge and such a universal fury of mental activity as was apprehended.

Uncle Fyford was neutral. The Sunday-school had not been so Jacobinical as he had feared. Mr. Rabbidge was tolerant, but not encouraging. He had not seen any alarming passion for literature result from letters, as he had taught them.

Reuben's comment was reassuring.

"The good Lord," he said, "had mercifully sent the good corn through John Wesley and others, before He set folks on putting up the mills to grind it, or the ovens to bake it. The preaching had come before the teaching, the Gospel before the spelling-book, the converting Spirit before the letter; and now the good words were there, the more schools there were to teach them, and the more pens to spread them the better."

Never was intercourse with Loveday Benbow more strengthening and hopeful

than during those years of many changes and many perils.

War was to her altogether evil, inhuman, diabolical. To her all victories were darkened, as that one victory of Trafalgar was to all England, by the shadow of death. The roll of glory was written within and without, to her eyes, with lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

Self-sacrifice in dying she could understand to the utmost. Self-sacrifice resulting in killing she would scarcely place higher than a highwayman's generosity.

For Toussaint L'Ouverture starved in the dungeon at Joux, for Andrew Hofer, the patriot betrayed and shot, she could weep. Over Nelson's dying agonies, lighted up by shouts of victory, she could only shudder. But throughout and underneath the great national conflicts, the old warfare was going on with which her life was identified. On this (however we might,

any of us, be turned aside by personal anxieties, or by literal battles on sea or land) Loveday's heart and eyes were steadfastly fixed.

Once more the abolition of the slave-trade had been brought before the House of Commons; and once more, after a large majority on the previous year, it had been thrown out. Yet this defeat did not discourage the best informed among its supporters.

At last, experienced eyes began to recognise an uncertainty and division in the enemy's ranks, as if they were on the point of breaking.

Not a few of the West Indian planters themselves began to waver; some, moved by the conviction of the injustice of the trade, and others by a persuasion of its impolicy. Those who were watching closely detected a thousand subtle symptoms that public opinion was veering round. Many

hearts were touched to the deepest indignation. Many consciences were aroused, if not to "godly repentance," at least to wholesome fear. The very presence of the whirlwind and the earthquakes of war, of the immeasurable perils threatening the country on so many sides, were like the *guillotine en permanence* before the nations; and many began to ask what accursed thing we might be harbouring amongst us which might be blinding the eyes of our rulers, and weakening the arms of our soldiers.

The two great rival leaders, Pitt and Fox, were altogether one in their desire to redress this wrong. Pitt had supported it from the first; had (Mr. Clarkson said) been "steadfast to the anti-slavery cause from the beginning;" he had "vainly sought to enlist France for it in 1788," he had "fostered it in its infaney," unable, Mr. Clarkson believed, from "insuperable difficulties which could not be mentioned," to

do more; he had given the weight of his unequalled eloquence to it again and again, and had at least "kept it from falling."

And now that Pitt had died without effecting the abolition, Mr. Fox took up the work more untrammelled than his predecessor, and sincerely determined to make its accomplishment one of the foremost objects of his policy.

What Nelson's grand battles were to England, every turn of the anti-slavery debates in Parliament was to Loveday. She felt sure that the days when fifty thousand helpless captives could be kidnapped year by year in Africa, and as many of them as survived the horrors of the voyage sold to fresh cruelties in the West Indies, were drawing to a close.

The very fervency of hope with which she looked forward to the approaching deliverance seemed too much for her sensitive and feeble frame. We had noticed with

anxiety the gradual failing of her strength, the increase of the worn, hollow look, which indicated sleepless nights, the reluctant abandonment of one little work after another. We scarcely dared to speak of these things to each other or to her.

Miss Felicity, absorbed in her brother, did not seem to observe these downward steps at all. Physical, like moral infirmity, was to her a stain on the family honour, to be ignored as far as possible in adults, and to be rigorously repressed in the young. Moral and physical failure were, indeed, hopelessly entangled for her, by that one case in which she accepted and condoned all infirmities, moral, mental, and physical, as the ruins brought on *from without* on her suffering brother, by a wicked and seducing world.

Miss Felicity would have held it an insult for any one to inquire for her own health; she was doing strictly as she would have

others do to her, in never prying into Loveday's. Having abandoned the struggle to make her well, the only remaining course was to let her alone, to be an invalid, in peace. If you could not fulfil your duty to your neighbour by being well, the less said about it the better.

Loveday had accepted the practice, and in part the theory. She never mentioned her own ailments ; and I believe she looked on her weakness as a humiliation, and in some way a wrong, which she inflicted on her father and on her aunt. She accepted her couch of pain and helplessness as a very low place in the kingdom. She felt, I believe, that there must be some especially bad possibilities in her, from which God mercifully had saved her through chastenings which He never willingly inflicted ; and she acted as if she could never do enough for her father and Miss Felicity and the world in general, to make up for being such a burden

on every one. And thus, accepting the lowest place, and never seeking to make it into a platform (such as can be made even out of poverty and pain, without the aid of vows or religious dress), all grace flowed naturally into her heart, and with it a sweet and calm content, and a glorious capacity for looking upward and enjoying a perpetual feast in the gifts and graces of all around her.

Once, I remember, she said to me, during those dark months of 1805—

“How can I ever repay Aunt Felicity for all her care of my father, for doing all I ought to have done? My heart and mind have been free to take up the burden of the slaves. But she has been a slave all her life for me and mine. And that,” she added, “is what makes true Church History so absolutely impossible. The deaths of martyrs and the deeds of philanthropists are seen and heard, and can be told; but

who can tell the anguish of the homes from which the martyrs came, or the sacrifices of those whose quiet work at home made the public work possible ?”

“Who, indeed,” I said, “can count the secret fountains? Many may speak of our Amice by-and-by. But what would Amice, or any of us, have been without this little couch and all we have learnt here?”

Which observation, to avoid controversy, I had to follow up instantly by presenting her with a letter from Amice.

Amice was more enthusiastic about Clapham than I expected; not, certainly, about her cousins, the Beckford-Glanvils, but about mine.

“It does one good, all through,” she wrote, “to be in such a wind of good words, and such a current of good work. It seems to me all so English, this Clapham world—patient, practical, conservative, reforming, impatient of abuses, patient of pre-

cedent in removing them. English in a very high sense, not perhaps the very highest—not exactly the English of Shakespeare, or Bacon, or Milton, or John Howe, or John Wesley ; not blind to the value of earthly good things, not at all, yet really holding them not as owners, but as stewards,—well-salaried stewards, certainly, but faithful. The giving is large ; almost large, I think, in proportion to the living. It is certainly not a case of ‘no purse, and only one coat ;’ nor of John Wesley’s two silver spoons, and out of an income of thirty pounds a year giving two, and out of an income of one hundred and twenty, ninety-two,—the private expenditure fixed, the *giving* only increasing. That is not the ratio. I do not say it should be. I confess also that sometimes the thousands of pounds subscribed do come out with a grand roll, as if they were equal to the ‘two mites,’ which, of course, they are not.

“Nor is the heroism so impressive, for instance, as that of the French Huguenots, or of St. Paul.

“The ships are too well built and victualled to be liable to frequent shipwreck, or to ‘hungerings often.’

“Nor does the literature strike me as likely to be immortal, except perhaps some sayings of Mr. Cecil’s.

“Everything strikes me as being on the second level. No Luther, no Latimer ; no genius, no martyrdom ; no perils, no glories ; no frightful ice-chasms, no dazzling snow-peaks, no spontaneous paradises of flowers among the ice seas.

“After all, are not all second generations apt to be on the second level ? Was it different with any of the Religious Orders ? Was it different with the earliest Church ? Must not the Church always be Protestant before it becomes Catholic ? And becoming Catholic, in its midst must not new

reformers have continually to rise and protest ?

“But this granted, *on this second level* work of the truest, conflict of the noblest, charity of the tenderest ; a wide grasp of the evils of the world, and a determination to combat them ; a close investigation into evils at home, and patient labour to remove them. Homes pure and tender, full of Christian activity, and of generous charity, and of able, effective helpfulness as could be.

“And your cousins, Bride, are delightful. My heart warms through every time I enter the house. Harriet, ‘the Reformer,’ has set her heart on accompanying me to the West Indies. And I believe Mr. Crichton will allow it.

“A good, healthy, habitable working zone of the Church it is to live in.

“And yet, and yet, good as I feel the atmosphere to be, and healthy, my ideal is

set a little higher and a little lower. You know you always thought me *tropical*. I want a little more sun, and a little more frost; a little more aspiration in thought; a little more poverty in life; a little more up on the heights; a little more down among the sufferers.

“Well, we must have different zones.

“My Moravians, I think, will suit me. They are very ‘still,’ which gives space for the heart to rise in contemplation, and very ‘plain,’ which disencumbers for pilgrimage.

“A little band will, I believe, go out with me; a detachment of them, to my father’s estate. Mr. Crichton is a little apprehensive as to the ‘soundness’ of my Moravians. Indeed, a certain section of Clapham does seem to me as if it would be better for a little more of Nelson’s childish experience. ‘*What is fear? I never saw fear!*’ It is afraid of so many things—of

mysticism, and Methodism, and Moravians, and rationalism, and ‘reason,’ and science, and society. It sees so many ‘dangerous’ subjects. It is curious that on one point its courage is almost reckless. It is not at all afraid to encounter the peril of being rich. And yet, on the whole, there seems to me more in the New Testament about the peril of being rich than about the peril of any kind of curious opinions.”

This was part of her letter to me. To Loveday she wrote :—

“The talking here is excellent and inspiring, but rather incessant. I shall be glad of a little ‘stillness.’ I want to listen, and look; and I want exceedingly not to be listened to and looked at so much, as if one were something wonderful. You have made me more than half a Quaker, Loveday, my friend of friends. I want some ‘silent meetings.’ I want to exercise myself by a good pull against the stream. Here one

seems borne on the current. And I am afraid of merely drifting.

“The hour of deliverance from the slave-trade is, they say, fast approaching. I shall scarcely see it in England. But you will. And I shall feel it among my ‘black mankind.’ And we shall rejoice together.”

I noticed that Loveday’s eyes moistened, and her voice quivered, as she read aloud that last sentence.

“We shall certainly all feel it somewhere,” she said; “and we shall certainly rejoice together. God knows where. And He knows best.”

And in February Amice wrote me another letter:—

“I have seen the two great funerals,” she said; “the mourners, all England. Not solemnity only and reverent silence was there when Nelson was borne through the crowded streets to St. Paul’s, but weeping, and sobbing, and bitter lamentation.

“ And in Westminster Abbey, little more than a month afterwards, England had to lay the other son in whom she trusted. Mr. Wilberforce, the friend of years, bore the banner before the coffin of William Pitt.

“ Both, Nelson and Pitt, so young ! In the prime of life ! Both worn out for England. What last words they have left echoing through every heart—

‘ My country, oh, my country ! ’

And the great motto—

‘ England expects every man to do his duty.’

What words to nerve and to inspire ! *Country* and *duty* ; and that ‘ *expect*, ’ I delight in that. The very highest is but ‘ that which it was our duty to do.’ What seed for heroic work in others !

“ And yet, where are they, the heroes, now ?

“ Mr. Wilberforce is indeed a good soldier in a good fight. And I suppose the

real heroes do have that easy, cheery look ; not borne down by their labours, but bearing others up. And I suppose age after age has wailed the same death-wail when its best were laid in the dust. In God's battles, I know, leaders cannot fail. But for England ? Where can she look now ? ”

She did not know that among the mourners around the grave of Pitt was Arthur Wellesley, just returned from the Mahratta war, and his victories at Assay.

CHAPTER IX.

ANXIETIES deepened on us in our little home-world, as well as in our world of England.

Francis had not prospered, as had been predicted, at the university. Every one had expected much of him, and he of himself. But he had simply glided through; and, at the end of the second year, rumours had reached my father of debt.

He questioned me, and made me tell all that Piers had done to save Francis, for so long. I had never seen him so roused.

“Debt, to the middle classes is like cowardice to a soldier,” he said. “A man who has the habit of it—who does not mind it as long as it only inconveniences other

people—has lost all backbone and muscle. He has done with living, and can only be dragged and pushed through life at other people's cost."

He reproached himself.

"Euphrasia, you were right!" he said. "I have been blind in refusing to recognise the evil."

But Mrs. Danescombe endeavoured to excuse.

"They are *gentlemanly* debts, Mr. Danescombe," she said. "It *is* a comfort that my poor Francis has not degraded himself by throwing himself away on low associates. You see, his tastes are all so refined. Books, Mr. Danescombe! He was always so particular, poor fellow, about the bindings of his books. And no doubt these young noblemen and gentlemen of fortune he has written about, who were so pleased to come to his rooms, could not be entertained quite like ordinary people. He will

learn the value of money in time. He was always open-handed.”

My father shook his head.

“Euphrasia, for heaven’s sake,” he said, “let us call things by their right names. If it had been a young man’s careless generosity, I would have had more hope. To give to equals or inferiors may, at least, be *giving*. To get into debt, to entertain people above us, is simply *bargaining* and swindling,—buying a position we have no right to with money we have no right to. It is the sin of the Pharisee and of the publican combined.”

“But this once we must give him a chance,” she pleaded to him.

“The only chance,” my father said, “is to let him feel the weight ; to let him feel that these easy, good-natured, selfish habits are tying and binding him with chains more difficult to bear, in the end, than it is to say ‘no’ in the beginning.”

“But these gentlemen who have accommodated him,” she said. “It would be such a disgrace !”

“Gentlemen !” exclaimed my father. “Let it be a disgrace. It *is* a disgrace. I will pay the butchers, and bakers, and laundresses. The gentlemen may abandon him, and wait.”

He was not to be moved. The rock at the basis of his nature was reached, and nothing would make him yield.

My stepmother turned to me.

A new tie began to spring up between us.

She wept, and bewailed herself and Francis, and thanked Piers and me for what she called our generosity ; and—which touched me most—she said all might be right yet, if only Piers could come back.

The ice-crust between us was altogether broken.

I used to sit for hours with her in the

Oak Parlour, listening to her, and trying to respond in a way which would not wound her.

We had the whist-parties, and the tea-parties, as usual, and she was more than usually complaisant and attentive to every one.

She kept up all the old forms of entertainment. She was so afraid Abbot's Weir should scent out anything wrong about Francis.

But, afterwards, she would give way altogether, and declare she was a monster to be able to seem unmoved when that precious boy was perhaps starving, or in prison.

I felt very sure that starving would not be the form in which Francis would suffer debt to press upon him. But a debtors' prison was by no means an unreal, or a very tolerable, dread in those days.

It made my heart warm towards Francis

just to feel how she loved him, and to her to feel how she could love.

The self-reproaches which I had inflicted on myself in my childhood, sitting at my sewing, on that window-seat, came back to me.

Surely, I thought, if I had loved my stepmother more, and Francis, things would have been better. I should have penetrated to her heart sooner. We should have been more united as a family, and more able to help each other.

And yet the excuses with which she excused him to herself were as repugnant to me as to my father.

At last, one morning came a letter in the laboriously neat handwriting of an uneducated person, addressed to Piers, with "Urgent" on the cover.

After a little hesitation my father opened it, and to his perplexity found it signed in our family name—"Dionysia Danescombe."

Slowly the meaning dawned on him. It was from some one calling herself the wife of Francis. "He had wished the marriage to be concealed from his family for a time," she said, "desiring to tell his father himself."

She had consented. She wished now she had not. Her father, also, had objected. His family had lived for generations in the village. They had a little farm and a general shop, and he did not like marriages with gentlefolks. They had been hasty and wrong, she feared. But Mr. Francis Danescombe had told her everything was sure to come right, and every one was sure to come round. Now, however, everything had gone wrong. Some of the creditors had found out the marriage, and had refused to wait any longer; and Francis was in prison, and her father was very angry. He had never had any wish for his daughters to marry gentlefolks, but if they *were* gentlefolks,

they must prove it, he said, by paying their debts; and she had always heard Piers was kind; and she did not know what to do but to write to him. She was sure every one would help poor Mr. Francis Danescombe, when they knew.

To my surprise, my father was less disturbed than my stepmother about this letter.

“Impertinent creature,” she said, “to dare to call herself my Francis’s wife!”

“It is certainly no consolation if she is not,” my father replied. “But I have no doubt she is. The letter is honest and straightforward enough. The poor child, no doubt, thinks Francis comes of the race of Cræsus; and she has, I fear, the worst of the bargain. It is a sad affair. But it may teach them something.”

“*Them*, Mr. Danescombe!” she exclaimed, bursting into tears, “you never surely mean to acknowledge such a connection. That my poor boy should be tied for

life to a creature that cannot fold or seal a letter properly !”

“My dear,” he replied, “if the law acknowledges the connection, what can we do ? The question, at present, seems to be to acknowledge the debt. And, indeed,” he continued, endeavouring to console her, “I think there is a cheerful side to the affair. The father, you see, did not wish it, which looks respectable. And he is a village shopkeeper and yeoman ;—not one of the rich university tradesmen, who prey on young graduates. And a debtors’ prison is the kind of lesson our poor Francis is not likely to forget.”

Every article in my father’s pleading was, I felt, telling the other way with Mrs. Danescombe.

“Indeed, Mr. Danescombe, I shall never be able to understand you,” she said. “What consolation there is in the poor deluded boy’s having made a low marriage

(which I do not for a moment believe he has); and if he has, what a comfort there is in her father being not only a tradesman but poor; and least of all, how can you think any good is to come of his being in a debtors' prison, you cannot expect me to comprehend. I confess I think this is not a subject for pleasantry."

"Pleasantry, my dear!" he exclaimed. "I never felt anything more serious or less pleasant in my life. But the most serious thing of all is the wretched habits which brought the poor boy to it. I was only trying to hope that might yet be cured."

"Wretched habits!" she said. "You talk as if Francis had been given to drinking or any other vice, when he has not a fault, but that his temper is too easy and his habits are too refined."

My father gave up the debate, with a sigh. And then he sat down at once at his *eseritoire*, and began to write a letter.

“To whom are you writing?” Mrs. Danescombe asked.

“To the girl’s father,” he replied, “to find out the truth and see what can be done.”

“You mean to believe all that creature writes!” she said, “and to leave my poor son to bear the suspense and misery?”

“My dear,” he said very gently, “if it is not true, let us hope Francis is not in prison; and if it is, what better way is there of helping him out?”

The letter was sealed and dispatched.

And every morning after it was at all possible an answer should arrive, my father, calm as he tried to be, went himself to the coach for the letters. And I with him.

On the third morning, the coach had already arrived, and there was a little stir and crowd around the door.

When we came there was a buzz of sympathy, and way was made for us at

once. A tall, spare, bronzed young man, partly turned from us, was helping to lift a wounded person of some kind into the inn parlour.

A little subdued moan came from the sufferer, and then a cheery word of thanks from a well-known voice.

And in another moment my father and I were standing with our own Piers, hand in hand, beside poor Dick Fyford, lamed at Trafalgar, and only landed, owing to some accidents of weather, the day before, on our coast.

“Picked him up at sea,” said Dick, indicating Piers.

With which vague vision of Piers floating from Lorraine to England on some ancient Ocean River, we had for the time to be content; Cousin Dick himself being the first subject of attention.

How content we were, I recollect to-day, as distinctly as if that were yesterday. It

was like springing straight from the breakers to the fireside. The whole world became *terra firma* once more. Everything, I was persuaded, must go right now; the French war; the abolition of the slave trade; Francis and his debts and marriage; Amice and her love, and her work for her slaves; Abbot's Weir, England, the world. And all because that one parting was over!

So long ago! So many partings since, without meeting again! Without the meeting again *yet*. And now, at last, so near the meeting; so nearly past all the partings, at least the partings *from being left behind*, is it any wonder my heart should bound sometimes, more like a happy child's than an old woman's? Is it any wonder that looking back to that return of my brother, the tears of joy come into my eyes again, whilst I feel now it was nothing but a shadowy glimpse and a momentary vision of what is to come, and is not to pass away?

CHAPTER X.

THERE were so many people in want of help in our little world when Piers came back to us, that there was little time to discuss his own adventures. Besides, Piers's genius was not exactly narrative. For many years some casual incident or remark would continue to bring out new fragments of his French experiences, but it was not in his way to make himself the hero of a consecutive autobiographical story. We had to put our "Odyssey" together as best we could out of stray allusions and episodes.

On one point he insisted persistently; and this was, that he owed his escape to Claire, to the easy, idiomatic French into

which we had naturally fallen with her from childhood, and to the friendly aid of the people who remembered her family in reaching the coast.

It was a fresh link between these two to have that *terra incognita* to all besides, the scenes of Claire's childhood, familiar ground to them.

Moreover, in those three years, the world of books had opened on Piers.

He had picked up fragments of the old libraries of the gentlemen of Port Royal, classical and mathematical, in farmhouses near the desolated abbey. He had found a safeguard from restless regrets and wishes in sharpening his mind against the old mathematical problems. In his banishment from those he loved and could serve in the present, the great men of the past, workers and thinkers, had come near to him; the life of the past had become a reality, and a school to him; and he came back to

us with the bracing and bronzing of Greece and Rome on his mind, as his face was browned and bronzed by the suns which had ripened the vineyards and cornfields of France.

In religious reading, he had been limited to a Port Royal copy of the Greek Testament, and to Pascal, so that in those years the incrustations and petrifications of Mr. Rabbidge's "letters" had been pierced in many directions by living springs of thought.

But this, like the rest, only came out in glimpses. The first obvious and certain discovery was that our healer and helper had come back to us, and that we had immediate need of him.

His first labour was to extricate Francis from prison, and to extract from him the truth concerning his debts and his marriage.

Piers did indeed find Francis in one of

the miserable dungeons in which John Howard had discovered the prisoners for debt twenty years before. The walls had been whitewashed, and some of the more obvious and fatal grievances had been removed; but he found him penned in with a forlorn company composed partly of destitute creatures fallen there through wrong and misfortune, and feeling the humiliation and helplessness bitterly, and partly of reckless men brought there by vice, and minding it very little, as long as they could gamble with each other, or bribe the gaoler to get them such food and drink as they cared for.

Francis was depressed and remorseful. He regretted his debts, and rather repented his marriage. He felt he had lowered himself; but at the same time he felt the punishment so far beyond his deserts, that he was half disposed to regard it as a wrong, for which the only *amende* his

family could offer him was to pay his debts, and to enable him to make his married life as comfortable as circumstances would admit.

“If you had been here, my dear fellow,” he said pathetically to Piers, “it would never have come to this.”

He had undoubtedly, he admitted, been too “open-handed,” but at the same time “he could not but be sensible that much of the result had been the consequence of our father’s being a little unsympathetic, and of the scandalous detention of the Ten Thousand by Napoleon Buonaparte.”

He felt himself a prodigal son indeed, but arrived at a very touching and hopeful point of his career. He had come to the husks. He found them unsatisfactory. He was ready to return. And no doubt his family were ready and even eager to receive him. None of them, he felt sure, were like the Pharisees. Piers was not a brother to

begrudge the fatted calf. And thenceforth there was no danger of his trying the husks any more.

The parable was complete with one omission.

The "*father, I have sinned*" was not there.

Although outwardly certainly much in the prodigal's position, Francis seemed inwardly to have a great deal more resemblance to the Pharisee.

He acknowledged that he had made mistakes. He had been too careless. But after all, at bottom he felt himself a person of finer tastes and of a better heart than those who had stayed in the father's house, and had got into no scrapes. He had, moreover, been reading religious books. He felt that he had lived hitherto in too legal a spirit. He had not apprehended the mercy of God, the freeness of pardon, and the imputation of righteousness. There was

something very affecting in the very illustration afforded by his present position. His father would pay the debt, and he would be liberated. But he should go out of prison an altered man, ready to take his degree, and to preach, he trusted, not without effect, as soon as he could be ordained.

At this proposition Piers was infinitely dismayed.

To him those words, which glided so smoothly from the lips of Francis, were such profound realities; and so inseparably united with other great moral realities of which Francis seemed to have no conception!

Sin, as the one evil of the world; Divine Love spending itself in redeeming agonies to rescue from sin; giving itself perpetually in discipline which wounded and probed, in pardons which bound up and healed, to raise the fallen soul from

the slough of selfishness up to itself,—were so engraven on his heart,—that to see any one grasping at the pardon not as a call back to the heart of the Father, but as an escape from the discomfort of regret, was to him the most terrible profanation.

His greatest hope was in Francis's marriage. He thought Mrs. Dionysia a young woman of considerable will and shrewdness; and he was inclined to believe, that once convinced that a certain income had to suffice she would have conscience and sense to keep Francis within it.

Francis would teach her "letters" (especially the letter "h"); and in return she would keep Francis within the limits of the law, and, probably, secure him a "respectable" career.

The creditors were therefore, by his advice, satisfied. Mr. and Mrs. Francis were established in suitable rooms, with

an allowance of which she was to be the chief steward. And Francis had every prospect, Piers thought, of becoming in her hands an altered man.

One earnest remonstrance Piers could not refrain from making, against the sacrilege of taking orders except from the loftiest motives. In this my father earnestly supported him. But Mrs. Danescombe and Mrs. Dionysia were by no means of the same opinion. They were persuaded that there could be no more respectable profession than the clerical, and therefore no profession more likely to lead to respectability. The character was sure to be insensibly influenced by the position.

And as to Francis, he was persuaded that his motives were as lofty as could be required, his talents exactly suited to the office, and he himself quite a changed character.

I was thrown back on my old theory of

Francis being a mere mask, a larva with the creature inside lacking. But a kind of external conversion or transformation, such as is possible to an external creature, he did seem to have undergone. The whole outer shape of his life was altered.

In Mrs. Francis's keeping, he became prudent, punctual, orderly, respectable, to the utmost point; gave his family no trouble, gave Mrs. Danescombe much satisfaction, was, people said, a credit to the family, to Mr. Rabbidge, to Abbot's Weir. And what more could be wished, in that ancient, conventional world of my step-mother's?

Piers's second labour was of a more congenial kind. He could not at all comprehend how we had all taken it as a matter of course that Captain Godefroy must remain a prisoner, while Amice went alone on her mission to her slaves. Ex-

changes had been effected, and could be effected. The Clapham influence, the Beckford-Glanvil borough influence—every influence must be used to set Captain Godefroy free.

With his own marriage in near prospect, his matrimonial sympathies were very strong. He went to London and waited on the officials, stirred up the influences which influence officials, touched the warm heart of the Countess of Abbot's Weir, and even moved the calm judgment of her lord, to discover what might be done; and finally had the joy of bringing back Amice in triumph to our own dear old house (Court being at the time in process of transformation for the reception of Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil)—with the promise of glorifying Abbot's Weir by a triple wedding.

For our wedding was indeed to be triple. Our cousin Dick Fyford had at last found the helpmeet whom he had no doubt Pro-

vidence had designed for him from the beginning. Patience, the eldest of Mr. Rabbidge's fourteen, had entirely captivated him in his captivity. A little older than himself (as had been usual with his early attachments), and, since the death of her mother, enriched by all the experience of serving and nursing involved in the care of thirteen brothers and sisters, she had been frequently called in by Uncle Fyford to give counsel and aid in tending Dick's wounds. On our cousin's impressible heart the natural result had ensued. Patience was more than usually loveable and wise, with a sweet voice, graceful movements, and a kind, bright face. His tenderness was won by the sweetness of what she was to him; whilst all the chivalrous protective manliness in him was roused by the thought of what he might be to her. It was, as he said (and I believe, truly), after all, his first love. Uncle Fyford de-

murred a little at first, for various social and prudential considerations.

But many things concurred to soften him. A large portion of Mr. Rabbidge's congregation having waked up to the imperfections of his doctrine, had abandoned him for a new chapel and an orthodox minister; whereupon Mr. Rabbidge had abandoned the remainder to a successor more capable of sustaining a drooping cause, and had glided, with his fourteen children, into a pew in the parish church.

My uncle Fyford felt the compliment, and acknowledged the step as the removal of a social barrier. Mr. Rabbidge's family was of respectable "*bourgeois*" origin, on the lower ranges of the professions, legal and medical. And then the whole thing was so conservative; which was certainly a recommendation. It was only for Patience to remove from the Abbey Gatehouse to the Vicarage. She would not

have any unreasonable expectations. She would not revolutionise his household, or even his cases of Coleoptera. It would be so little trouble, and would make so little difference, and he was so used to her quiet ways, and her quiet soft voice, that, on the whole, he easily glided into feeling it the most natural sequence. In short, he soon began to be of Dick's opinion that "Providence" must have designed it from the beginning. And so Dick, at Patience's request, was to be changed into Richard; and we were to have a triple wedding.

How different the course of true love had been in each case; and yet in each, in its measure, true!

With Dick, secure anchorage of a home, sheltered and safe in England, to which his heart might turn and rest, however he might be tossed and knocked about, for the old country, by storms or broadsides abroad.

To Piers and Claire the quiet ripening and fulfilling of the long love of earliest years.

With Amice the raising and glorifying of every faculty and capacity of her rich nature to its highest power. The discovery of a new world, the creation of a new life, almost of a new self. I had long since come to rejoice for her, and in her, with my whole heart and soul. Who could help it, loving her half as well as I did, seeing now she grew to be all her dear, noble self, in the sunshine of that great ennobling love; how the new light and life penetrated to every inmost depth, and every uttermost blossom of her being?

So the triple wedding came to pass.

In those days, Abbot's Weir had not blossomed into æsthetics, social or ecclesiastical. Bridal veils and orange-flowers had not penetrated to our remote regions. Bridesmaids were in this instance a diffi-

culty; I being the only one of our more immediate circle left unmarried. However, fortunately, the requirements of the age were not so severe as to the multiplicity of assistants then as now. I did duty for Claire and Amice, and two of Patience's sisters for herself; and Uncle Fyford married the three couples quite securely without assistance.

But we thought it all very complete and festive. The sweetness and beauty of the brides made festival enough for us, as we sat at breakfast on the Vicarage lawn; the queenly majesty of Amice's movements, and the southern splendour of her radiant face contrasting with the grace and graciousness of our Claire, and the sweet English freshness of Patience.

And the landscape was fair enough to set our jewels. The sunny Vicarage lawn, the old-fashioned garden, the picturesque ruins of the Abbey, around and beyond;

for a background, the river sweeping along the meadows beneath the wooded hills, and the grey, old, familiar Tors; and for human surroundings, the children of the Sunday-school at the feast Amice had provided them in the Abbey Stillhouse, where we had taught them together for so many years, Reuben and Chloe being master and mistress of the ceremonies.

It was certainly not a wedding without tears. To me, if I dared to think of it (which I did not), this beginning was an ending of so much!

Different as the course and the character of the love which united them to each other, was the course of the life before them.

To Cousin Dick and Patience, as Uncle Fyford had said, in outward scene and circumstance little change.

But to Amice and Claire how much!

Piers and Claire were to live, at first at least, in the old Manor farm, belonging

to my father's family; one of the many small manor-houses then existing in our neighbourhood. In its earliest stage, centuries ago, it had doubtless been a stately dwelling compared with the rough cottages of the labourers around it. And to this day an air of good birth and breeding lingered around it. There was a paved court in front, entered by an arched gateway; and a sunny terrace at the side, sloping to one of the countless musical brooks which run among our hills, with beehives on it, and borders of thyme and sweet marjoram and roses and pansies. And within were a hall, with a long mulioned window, and a wainscoted parlour with armorial bearings carved over the large fireplace, and a broad oak staircase with banisters adorned with carvings of nondescript heraldic creatures, beaked and clawed. And all around its steep roofs and fine old clustered chimneys, a shelter-

ing phalanx of fine old trees, throwing deep shadows athwart the courts and gables and sunny slopes, and making morning and evening musical with the cawings of a pre-historical tribe of rooks, which no doubt looked down a little in a kindly and protective way on us Danescombes as "quite a new family."

A pleasant place it was for Claire to make fair with flowers and fresh draperies, and above all with her own fresh grace; to watch her husband ride from in the morning over the green meadows, and to welcome him to in the evening, with some new discovery or invention of home-delight.

And so life began for Claire and Piers as a delicious pastoral, sunny and pure and calm, shedding the light of its own lustre unconsciously around; whilst Amice and Hervé Godefroy were bent on pilgrimage, literally and mystically, over un-

known seas to unfamiliar shores, through untried difficulties, to duties as yet dimly perceived. Around them no scenery of sunny pastoral, but storm and battle and peril, to test and develop all that was deepest and highest in them both. No fair golden setting of circumstance around their love. They had only the love itself, the precious stone itself, with all its depth of light and mystic meaning; *only each other*, as a shield for each other against the world, as a shield together for the sufferers of the world.

Yet certainly they did not feel their lot the poorest.

Nor did I.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVEDAY and I were thus, in a sense, left alone, of all the happy circle of my childhood.

Loveday had always seemed as young as any of us; and now I felt certainly as old as she was, not at all regretfully or gloomily, but as if set in a little skiff which had reached a calm creek; in a sense, outside the current of life, yet not by any means stranded or anchored, but ready at any moment, at any call, to be in the mid-current to succour any one there. Loveday's skiff had been a life-boat to many. Better I could not wish for mine.

And yet, and yet,—there was a silence

in the familiar old terraced garden on the Leas and by the Leat, and in the empty rooms of the dear up-and-down old house. What was the use of listening to the silence, or of filling it with tears;—of being left behind, or of looking only backwards?

As Amice had said years before, when Piers went first to Mr. Rabbidge's school, "*Then don't be left behind.*"

I would not. Loveday never had been. We would press forward, Loveday and I, together. By the way, we should find not a few "hands that hang down" to lift up. Mine should not be hands that hang down, but hands that lift the burdens of others up. So help me God.

After all, there was double work to do in many ways; and if double work with half-power is depressing to look at, it is inspiring to do. The half-power grows to double power by trying, when the work is given

us ; and the breath cannot be spent in sighing when all is wanted for the race.

Our Cousin Dick had to leave home soon after his marriage ; and he commended Patience especially to my cousinly and “grandmotherly” care, which she needed, having had her strength overstrained too early by the struggle to make poverty press as lightly as possible on her father and the fourteen, who continued to appeal to her as of old.

And one great gain came to me out of the many gains to others which were in an external sense at first loss to me. My father and I became closer companions than ever. Piers was with him by day, but the mornings and evenings were mine ; often entirely mine, Mrs. Danescombe being not seldom absent on visits to Francis and his wife. Together we walked through the woods and meadows, or rode among the breezy moors and Tors. And together we

roamed over our marvellous English literature, past and present, resting in its sunny pastures, and scaling its far-seeing heights; resting ourselves with his beloved Cowper, in his *Winter Walks* by the Ouse, or in his *Winter Evenings* by the Fireside; or led by Shakspeare through the length, and breadth, and heights and depths of human character and human life. Occasionally also new voices came to us, comparatively feeble then, and not at their full force,—yet (my father thought) not without something of the old fire and *timbre* in them,—in the early poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Our father never made a barrier of the past to block out his vision into the present. And so one of the best of all friendships grew up for me—the friendship between a father and a daughter; preserving youth for the child, restoring youth to the parent; enriching the young with the wealth of the recollected past, inspiring the aged with

the life of the future which is to expand it; and hallowing all—the friendship, the memories, the hopes—with the tenderness of sacred instinctive affection. Often I felt that all my loss elsewhere was made up to me by the gain here. Often I thanked God that I had learned to estimate this treasure before it was too late.

In politics it was not a cheerful time.

It seemed to my father a long descent from the rule of Pitt, of the one man of genius, to the ministry of “All the Talents” which succeeded him. Nor did he share Charles Fox’s sanguine hopes of peace with the Emperor Napoleon. He could never comprehend how any one could trust the man whose bulletins were one series of rhetorical lies, who had crushed all true liberty in France, betrayed Venice, and trampled on Switzerland; who had caused the guiltless Duke d’Enghien to be assassinated at midnight in the ditch at Vin-

cennes, and the noble German bookseller Palm, in open day, near Nuremberg for refusing to give up the name of the author of a patriotic pamphlet ; who hated England with the hatred of an imperious will baffled, and a successful conspirator unmasked, hated her as he hated freedom, and patriotism, and genius, and goodness, as he hated Madame de Staël, Queen Louisa of Prussia, and the noblest of the Republican soldiers ; as he hated all that were too great or too true to fall at his feet and worship him, with a hatred which hesitated at no weapons, from the slander of a womanish spite, to midnight assassination, or the slaughter of thousands.

For England to make peace with such an enemy, seemed to my father, to betray weaker nations, and her own noblest reason of existence ; to sacrifice the reality of patriotism to the theories of liberalism. It was one of the cases, he thought, not unfre-

quent, in which heart and genius saw alike—the heart of the nation and the genius of her greatest—and saw truer than prudence and talent—the prudence of the subtlest policy, and the ability of “All the Talents.”

Grievous it was therefore to him to hear of negotiations going on with M. Talleyrand through all the summer of 1806, from spring till autumn, while Napoleon was using the time in bringing nation after nation into submission; “submission,” which, as Lord Howick said, “never stopped his progress.”

His only consolation was to turn to the other of the two objects which it was said Charles Fox had set his heart on carrying—to the long parliamentary warfare against the slave-trade opened by the first Quaker petition in 1783.

On June 10, 1806, Charles Fox himself, as Prime Minister, moved — “That this House, considering the slave-trade to be

contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and policy, will with all practicable expedition take effectual measures for its abolition." "His own life was precarious;" he said, "if he omitted this opportunity of saving the injured Africans he might have no other opportunity; and under the circumstances he dared not neglect so great a duty." "If he should succeed in carrying through this measure," he declared, "he should consider his life well spent, and should retire satisfied that he had not lived in vain."

Too soon was the precariousness of the life, and the sacredness of that opportunity proved. It was indeed his last. That eloquent voice was no more to be heard in Parliament. His health failed almost immediately after that motion was carried by a majority of 114 to 15 in the Commons, and by 41 to 20 in the House of Lords.

Within three months, Charles Fox was

laid close beside William Pitt in the north transept of Westminster Abbey.

“The giants are dead,” it was said; “we who have seen them know. We have come to the lesser race.”

Another of her great sons had been sacrificed to his work for England. The negotiations for peace with France, from which Charles Fox had hoped so much, had failed. Care and failure had told heavily on his already weakened frame. But “even when removed by pain and sickness from the discussion of political subjects,” Mr. Clarkson wrote, “he never forgot the Anti-slavery cause. ‘Two things,’ he said, on his death-bed, ‘I wish earnestly to see accomplished—peace with Europe, and the abolition of the slave-trade. *But of the two I wish the latter.*’”

The last and best was granted; and the hope of it was permitted to dawn on his dying eyes. Again and again, as disease

made progress, he spoke of it. Indeed, as Lord Howick said in the House of Commons, "the very hope of the abolition quivered on his lips in his last hours."

Debates followed in both Houses, sometimes prolonged till the dawn; until at last on Wednesday, the 25th of March, 1807, Lord Granville's ministry ennobled themselves, and England, by obtaining the royal assent to the abolition of the slave-trade, in the very last hour of their existence, when his Majesty had demanded the resignation of office rather than yield Catholic emancipation.

It was decreed that no slave should be landed in the British colonies after March 1st, 1808.

That was a day of pure and exalted triumph at Clapham. To those who fought that battle success was incomparably dearer than fame, and the success of March 25 was the glory of each, and the joy of all.

Twenty years before, in 1787, the first meeting of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade had been held, by twelve men, mostly merchants, all but two Quakers; at their head Granville Sharp, who had struck the first blow in rescuing Jonathan Strong twenty years earlier yet, in 1767;—amongst them Thomas Clarkson, who of all the advocates approached the nearest to the martyr's crown, having again and again risked his life in hunting out, through riotous taverns, and on stormy seas, the evidence which convinced the nation and the Parliament.

For forty years they had carried the contest on;—their first victory the decision wrung from Lord Mansfield, that no slavery was possible on English soil.

During those forty years, the monarchy of France had perished; the French Republic had fallen before the Empire; all Europe, all freedom and national life

were falling before Buonaparte and the terrible instrument of destruction he had created out of prostrate France.

Three times invasion had threatened our shores. Our navy had saved us, but had lost its greatest commander. Two of our greatest ministers had died, worn out with the combat with Buonaparte.

But steadily, undistracted by perils they felt as keenly as any, or by the ruins of fallen dynasties and falling nations, and undismayed by defeat and calumny, Wilberforce and Clarkson, and those who worked with them, had pursued their great purpose of rescuing a race.

And at last the mid-day sun of Wednesday, March 25, 1807, shone on their victory.

Clapham went to the ends of the earth for metaphors magnificent enough to express the joy. My cousins wrote me that Mr. Wilberforce had been compared to "Manco

Capac, the child of the sun, descended on earth in pity to human suffering."

A medal was struck, with the head of Mr. Wilberforce the "Friend of Africa" on one side, and on the reverse, a number of Pagan allegorical personages, with wreaths, Æsculapian serpents, and shields, one of these personages being crowned by a winged being from a cloud, carrying a cross; encircled by the motto which, breaking through the cold haze of allegory, goes straight and warm to the heart—" *I have heard their cry.*" And better than all, through the shouts of victory were heard the threatening murmurs of a war which was to lead to greater victory yet.

Lord Percy spoke of the abolition, not only of the slave-trade, but of *slavery*; and Sheridan dared to say in the House that the abolition of the slave-trade was but a prelude to the emancipation of the slaves.

The planters, and all those interested in

maintaining slavery (like the Dames at Abbot's Weir—and like the Pharisees), had indeed seen, from the first, whither the conflict was tending, better than many of those who began it.

It was a daily delight to me to carry every detail of the debates to Loveday, as she lay, now no longer on the little couch, but on her bed, placed as near the window as might be, that she might see the birds which came to the window-sill for crumbs, and the children playing in the empty market-place. Sometimes I thought her very peace and joy must keep her alive.

“Wish it, *only wish it enough*, Loveday!” I said to her one day, “and you will live to the next victory as you have lived to this.”

On the morning when I told her the King's consent to the abolition had been given, she yielded to a passionate emotion, rare indeed for her. She wept and sobbed

for joy. And then she broke into ritual observance.

"Bride," she said, "I cannot stay in bed to-day; I must dress, and, dear, you will place the couch in the front window in the dear old schoolroom; and Piers and Mr. Danescombe will come and lift me to it. And I shall see the children all together again."

She meant not so much again, as "once more," only once more. But she would not pain me by saying so.

Miss Felicity considered it a craze, but she made no resistance.

And that afternoon Claire and I had our Loveday once more on the little couch where she had taught me my "heroes," to say to Miss Felicity, on the first day that Claire kissed me with the fool's-cap on.

In the close white cap and the soft grey unrustling dress, and all her cloud of white and dove-colour, with a faint rosy flush on

her pale face, like a cloud touched by the earliest dawn.

There she lay like a crowned queen, while all the children came to her, one by one, and from a little basket by her side she gave each some little token; to the girls, pincushions and needlecases, and knitted mittens and housewives, made out of bits of the old dove-coloured dresses; and to the boys, knives and little seals and pencils which she must have ransacked her scanty childish stores to furnish; for, money, she always considered she had none that was not due to her father and Miss Felicity.

She had some kind little saying for every one, and she begged them all to keep the things as keepsakes for her, and as tokens that the *poor African mothers and fathers and little children were not to be stolen from their homes again any more, for ever*. And then she kissed them all.

The children were pleased, but very sub-

duced. I think they looked on it as some religious festival, which indeed it was, and felt the kiss something sacramental.

And then, when the gifts were given, she said, not in entreaty, but with a gentle easy authority, as of one accustomed to command—

“Aunt Felicity, I want them all to have a holiday this afternoon, that they may remember the day.”

And Miss Felicity made no difficulty or demur, strict as her regulations about holidays were; none having ever been granted by her before, within the memory of Abbot's Weir for causes less historical than the Day of the martyrdom of the blessed King Charles I.—to the confusion of the Jacobins—or the day of the “happy deliverance of King James I. and the Three Estates of England, from the most treacherous and bloody-intended massacre by gunpowder”—to the confusion of the Papists.

Every one felt that this was Loveday's *fête*, like a birthday, a wedding, or a coronation.

And so the children went away; but their subdued demeanour, which usually ended with the supposed range of Miss Felicity's inspection, lasted further that day.

The little ones went quietly all the way to their homes, to the surprise of their parents; as if it had been Sunday.

And we, Piers and Claire and my father and I, spent the afternoon with her also, as if it had been Sunday; one of George Herbert's Sundays.

"Day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this; the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight;"

a day on which

"Heaven's gate stands ope,"

as indeed it seemed to stand to us that day, seeing the light shine through it on

Loveday's radiant face, and feeling her so near the entering in.

It was indeed her last day among us all. It seemed like a receiving the Viaticum together.

And after that, I felt the journey had to be taken, and we must let her go.

Something about the day having been like Sunday I said to her when we had lifted her to her bedroom again, and I was leaving her for the night.

"Like Sunday? Yes," she said, "but not a Sabbath; not a close. Not a seventh day, but a first day of the week. A beginning. The victory which made it a festival is only the first victory of the campaign. The warfare has to go on, and you will all help to carry it on. And *we* also," she said with a solemn joy, "if we are with Him Who is conquering and to conquer,—nearer Him than we can be here—we, I think, surely may help, not less."

She said few of what are usually called last words. Her words had all been spoken on the shores of the eternal sea, whose murmurs make last words so sacred—in the Presence which makes that sea but as the Sea of Galilee on that calm morning when the risen Master waited there to welcome the disciples to the shore.

She never spoke of closing and ending, or repose, or death; but of continuance, and beginning, and service, and life.

“ ‘Going to rest?’ ” she said. “Yes! such rest as is possible to love; the rest of Michael the Archangel, the rest of Him who was ‘persecuted’ in His Stephen, and Whose strength was made perfect in the weakness in His Paul. ‘Sleep;’ yes, the sleep of those who ‘rest not day nor night.’ *All that needs sleep* in us to be left behind in ‘the sleeping-place.’ And *we*, for *us*, waking, serving, *seeing*, with eyes that can bear to see ‘face to face.’ ”

“I hope I have been learning a little,” she said. “And now I shall begin to use what I have learned. Not, indeed, ‘ten talents,’ or ‘ten cities,’ Bride; but perhaps some little village, some little corner of the worlds, to help.”

“Why not *this* corner?” I said; “dear Loveday. Why not *us*?”

“I should like it best of all,” she said, with her child-like smile. “And we shall be near enough to ask Him. And He knows and cares without our asking. But He will do the very best, here and there for us all. Here, if we will let Him choose; and *there* we shall delight for Him to choose.”

One morning, when I came, she was holding in her feeble hands a letter from Amice. She gave it to me to read, and watched me earnestly as I glanced through it.

And as long as her cough gave her an intermission, she entered into every detail

of Amice's letter, which was very bright, though not remarkably sanguine.

"I write to thee first, our Loveday," Amice wrote, "because I am in thy country, among thy people. Dear, they are not as delightful as thyself. They are not exactly the aristocracy of the races. I am afraid they have not yet reached a region where they can be ruled without rewards and punishments. And I am afraid the reward most of them like best is repose in the crudest sense of doing nothing. A Paradise of lying still in the sunshine, and occasional singing and dancing, with a good deal of sugar, sensuous, and spiritual, would satisfy them.

"In tastes, intellectual and physical, we cannot imagine how to meet them. The things we like would be a burden to them. The things they like would certainly not be delights to us.

"But then there is the heart; that in us

all which *loves* ; that is, our inmost selves. And this, of course, we cannot pounce on in a moment.

“ Poor, dear, blundering, imitative children ; children with the passions of middle age, and the cunning of hunted old age.

“ On one of the estates they wished to get up a Sunday service in emulation of the white men, and for their Liturgy, recited in solemn, measured accents, with responses, ‘ *This is the house that Jack built !* ’

“ Sometimes I am afraid the sacred words in our real worship may, in their ignorance, be to some of them little better.

“ Indeed, for that matter, we are nearer such absurdities than we think, all of us, when we make our devotions in any degree a repetition of charms, instead of a communion of heart or a lifting up of the soul. It is so difficult to know when they *understand*, and when they only catch the words

and tones, and *copy*, like clever, timid children.

“Yet, here again, there is the *heart* in common. That they can love, and sacrifice all for love, is true. ‘They may shoot me dead, or do with me what they please,’ one of them said, ‘if they only do no harm to our teachers.’

“And some of them, I am sure, have learned from the Moravians, of a pitying, loving, suffering, dying Saviour, to please Whom they will be patient and honest (and which seems to me a miracle of grace), will work industriously for masters who have no more right to their service than a thief to a stolen purse.

“Also, we are beginning to discriminate, to see differences among them—in character, and also in race and training. We have a few men of quite higher races; one Mahommedan, who can read Arabic.

“But the grand difficulty is the slavery itself, soften it as one can.

“Often Burke’s words occur to me, ‘*Nothing makes a happy slave but a degraded man.*’ I feel the wrong and injustice press on us so heavily, now that we are close to it, that sometimes we think (tell Bride and Piers) there is no real remedy but the one Piers propounded at Miss Felicity’s years ago, when I told him, for his pains, he was a very little boy and knew nothing of what he was talking about; namely, to set them free at once.

“To train people to be men by keeping them children—to train people to be free except by making them free, by letting them bear the consequences of their sins and mistakes, seems to me, more and more, an impossibility.

“What does the whole history of the world mean but that it *is* an impossibility, even to God?

“We have found that Mr. David Barclay, one of your community, as no doubt you know, did emancipate thirty slaves in Jamaica about ten years since; but he could not do it in the island. He had to transport them to Philadelphia, and there apprentice them to trades. It answered in almost all cases; but the coldness of the climate of Pennsylvania was a difficulty.

“Meantime Christianity can raise and does raise some even of these slaves. ‘If the Son makes any one free, he is free indeed.’

“Only it seems to me more difficult for owners to do missionary work than for others; especially for owners who feel slavery a great wrong.

“I want to be down among them, poor and toiling and suffering; and we cannot.

“We cannot; oh, Loveday. How can I? when God has made me rich with every kind of riches, and, above all, with

such unutterable treasures of love and joy?"

"How good of God," Loveday murmured, as I laid the letter down beside her, "to let me know even that! And yet how foolish!" she added. "As if we should be blind and deaf, and forgetful *there*. Blind in His light! Deaf with His voice within hearing! Forgetful in His presence, Who careth for the sparrows, to Whom one of us is 'more than many sparrows!' Oh, Bride, how I love those words! There seems to me a smile in them, like a mother with playful tenderness reassuring a weeping, frightened child."

And then came an interval of breathlessness and pain, and she could say no more.

"Amice has crossed her sea, and begun her new life before I have," she said, when it was over.

"But oh, Loveday," I said, "no letters, no message, no sound across that sea!"

“Not from that side,” she said. “Only one Voice audible to mortal ears. ‘*Go and tell my brethren that I am risen and go before them,*’ was *from that side*. And it is enough. But messages from *this side*, who knows how constantly? And we are to be with Him Whom those messages reach, with Him to Whom here we pray.”

“No,” I said; “the blindness, dimness, deafness, can be only here! But oh, Love-day, say—promise, prophesy—that you will not forget or change!”

“Did you make Amice promise?” she said, stroking my face as I bent over her. “Life changes us more than death; more than living with Him who changes not. With Him we shall be more ourselves, not less. *All* ourselves, our true selves, perfected; knowing more, hoping more, loving more. My dear, love in heaven must be deeper than love on earth. No love in idleness, no mere delicious leisures its chief

rewards; but caring, giving, helping, serving, *giving itself*. *Loving more than here!* My darling," she concluded, "who hast been so true to me, so much to me, so long, it seems difficult to think so. Yet it must be true. With Him Who loves best. Loving even more than now. Although it seems difficult to think so. *Loving more.*"

And after that I know not that she said much.

It came to nursing night and day. Many of those she had taught entreated to be allowed to help. Her sick-bed was supplied with the best dainties the little town could give, from little shops, and from the gardens of the poor, sent with apologies in the most delicate way, as to a princess. And every morning Claire brought the sweetest flowers. Not one service was rendered her that was not a service of love.

And when all the pain was over for her, for ever, a rare gleam of intelligence and

tenderness came even over her poor father, as he looked on her face for the last time, pale and lifeless and full of deep rest, with lilies and white roses around her, Claire's last offering. Old memories seemed to wake up within him.

"My poor child! Good little Loveday! She was like her poor mother. I did not do all I might for either of them. God forgive me." Then turning to Miss Felicity and recurring to the habitual shield of "adverse circumstances" which she threw around him, he concluded, "But everything went against me."

But even Miss Felicity, as she led him away, for once forgot the shield, and did not try to comfort or excuse him. She knew too well how sure the stream is to sweep down those who do not pull against it.

She only said, "*God can forgive us!* He has more than made up to her. He can

make us a little like her,—a little, before we die.”

The beauty of the patient life had burst on her at last, now it was finished. It had then, after all, been no poor ruin ; but a lovely cherished shrine of God.

But to me all through those sad days, and from her grave, beside that of my own mother, her words kept echoing back, as if from heaven—

“ *With Him Who loves most. Loving more even than she loved here below. Although it seems difficult to think so. Loving more.*”

CHAPTER XII.

THE years were come during which England had to pull absolutely alone against the stream; the whole continent swept away by the torrent of Buonaparte's victories; the oldest dynasties following with such acquiescence as they could assume in the wake of his triumph; the nations dragged helplessly on, not yet aroused. And England herself without any leader, on the throne, in the Council, in Parliament, by sea or by land, to whom she gave her whole trust; Nelson, Pitt, and Fox all laid low in her defence.

Yet the spirit of the nation was high and unwavering. The conscience of men had been freed from the sense of a great national

wrong. The least symptom of success to our army was welcomed by many, after the abolition of the slave-trade, as a sign of Divine approval; whilst failure, as at Buenos Ayres, was resented as the result merely of the incapacity of the leader, and did but increase the sturdy determination of the people not to give in.

Meantime Europe seemed falling deeper and deeper. On the 14th of October, 1806, Prussia touched her depth of humiliation at Jena. In November Buonaparte had entered Berlin in triumph. Happily for Prussia and for her kings, at the last, they fought and fell with the nation, and were honourably identified with her sufferings. While dismembering the kingdom, Buonaparte circulated calumnies against the noble Queen, and stooped to call the King "General Brunswick." Prussia and her royal race were in the dust together; and from the dust together they arose.

But as yet not a promise nor a stir of rising life was visible.

From Berlin Napoleon had issued, in November, 1806, the famous "Berlin Decrees," making all English commerce contraband.

In April, 1807, after his victory of Friedland, Napoleon met the Czar Alexander in the richly canopied tent on the raft on the river Niemen, and concluded the Treaty of Tilsit.

North and south, east and west, on all the dreary horizon, not a Power seemed to lift its head in opposition, over the fields swept level by triumphant armies; kings were acquiescent, and nations prostrate. Sweden, our one ally at that moment, under the young king so soon to be dethroned, seemed scarcely a Power, and scarcely within the European horizon. Buonaparte's brothers were on the thrones of Naples, Holland, and Westphalia; and one was soon to be on the

throne of Spain; whilst his generals were to be transferred to those of Naples and of Sweden.

Yet, hopeless as everything looked, national life was not extinct.

It is good now to recall the thrill of delight with which the first symptom of the rekindling life was welcomed throughout England.

England had seemed the only living nation left in the world, the only people that at the touch of the French armies and the word of the Conqueror would not crumble into atoms. Was there such a thing, some might question, as national life at all? Was not human society after all a mere nebula of disconnected atoms, in perpetual oscillation, and perfectly indifferent around what centre they were grouped, as one attraction or another proved the stronger; the isolation of England being simply mechanical and geographical, an

affair of a few miles of separating sea ? Was not the "nation," after all, a Platonic dream, as obsolete as any other of the "Universal Ideas," or any other exploded theory of old scholasticism ? the only reality being individual existence, and self-interest.

The answer came from the most unexpected side ; from Spain, asleep for centuries under her imbecile kings.

Buonaparte did but attempt with her what elsewhere had been submitted to patiently enough. The game seemed safer than usual. There was a division in the royal house. One puppet was intriguing against another. What could be easier than to entrap both, betray both, and set a Buonaparte on the vacant throne ?

But then suddenly the great chess-player discovered that the pieces had life ; kings, queens, bishops, knights, pawns ; pawns most evidently of all, and most unaccount-

ably of all; were not *puppets* but *men*, fathers and sons, families, a *nation*.

From end to end Spain awoke; awoke, arose, lived, palpitated in every limb with life. Simultaneously, not at the summons of any one great Leader, but spontaneously, without preparation, city after city, province after province, rose, felt they were not many but one; and, as one man, refused to be at the bidding of the man before whom all Europe had bowed down.

The enthusiasm of sympathy throughout England was universal.

All our England (the England some call prosaic, with an exceptional Alfred, Shakespeare, Milton, Cromwell, Nelson, or William Pitt) ran wild with welcome to the "patriots of Spain."

Sonorous Spanish names rang like our own great patriotic household names through every sober little country town in the land. The Maid of Saragossa became

as much a heroine among us as Joan of Arc ought to have been in France. England demanded to spend her treasure and her blood in helping this new-born people to freedom. The name of freedom had its old magic still among us, and knit the countrymen of Drake in brotherly bonds to the old enemies of the Armada. Mr. Wilberforce said in the House of Commons, "that every Briton joined in prayer to the Great Ruler of events to bless with their merited success the struggles of a gallant people, in behalf of everything dear to the Christian, the citizen, and the man."

We who know what came after that first trumpet-call of patriotism and liberty, the struggles with the incapacity and selfishness of "patriotic Juntas," which all but baffled Wellington, and all the chaos that has followed, may find it difficult to recall the deep and generous response that Spanish appeal awoke.

But into whatever feeble and discordant echoes the music fell, it was, nevertheless, in its beginning, a true trumpet-call, clear and strong, giving forth no uncertain sound. It awoke the nations from a sleep of despair into which they never fell again, to prepare themselves for the battle. And for any nation to have rendered that service to Europe is a possibility and a fact never to be forgotten.

It was in May, 1808, that this voice of patriotic resistance reached us from Spain.

On the 12th of July, Arthur Wellesley sailed from Cork for Corunna.

In August he defeated the French at Vimieira ; and the Peninsular War, and the fall of Buonaparte had begun.

Buonaparte had touched the sacred realities of human life ; and henceforth his warfare was no longer merely with dynasties, but with nations, and with men.

During those years my father woke to new hopes for the world.

He had always looked on Buonaparte as the most unmitigated embodiment of the principle of selfishness which is the root of human evil that the world, or at least Christendom, had seen; the devil's ideal of humanity, "Ye shall be as gods," opposed to the divine, "I come to do Thy will."

And selfishness, evil could not, he thought, create, or even organize. Being a negation of light, and heat, and life, it can only detach, divide, disorganize, deny, destroy. The nearest approach it makes to positive organization is in freezing, crystalizing living waters into ice. But the unity thus created is only apparent; ice-seas, icebergs, iceblocks, with no power in them save that of mass and momentum; power which the petal of a flower at the touch of the sun can vanquish.

Into such iceblocks Buonaparte had been freezing the nations; with such an ice-torrent he had been laying them waste, through his Grand Army. And now, at the awaking of life within the nations, the whole frozen fabric was crashing down, or melting away.

He had been able to create nothing. It incensed him that men of genius did not rise at his call. He was ready to lavish rewards and decorations on them. But in the icy atmosphere he had spread, no literature could grow. Even the code called by his name was truly, my father said, but a modification of the work of the Republic; the literature that did flourish was but the feeble harvest of earlier sowing. The conglomerations of people he had forced together into "kingdoms," did not recognise themselves as corporate bodies; and when the icy hand was withdrawn, they simply flowed, without effort, back into

the old channels. The one thing which had seemed most like a creation, the Grand Army which moved at his bidding, and was inspired by his will, which had enlarged and compacted year by year, and had crushed and desolated Europe, was indeed no organization of life to Europe or to France, but only a terrible engine of death, soon to recoil on itself.

And from the first moment when the nations awoke, that engine of destruction, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, was doomed.

Many vicissitudes indeed there were.

The pathetic elegy—

“Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,”

rang like muffled bells throughout England when Sir John Moore fell at Corunna.

Deep was the indignation among us when Andrew Hofer was betrayed and shot in the Tyrol; and true was the grief to many of us when the young Schill fell in battle,

saving Buonaparte from the dishonour of executing another patriot as if he had been a rebel.

Many were the reasonable grumblings and murmurings among us when the Government lavished money in sending thousands of Englishmen to die of marsh-fever at Walcheren, and withheld supplies from Sir Arthur Wellesley. Many also were the unreasonable grumblings when Sir Arthur Wellesley, after the victory of Talavera, retired within the lines of Torres Vedras, refusing to risk England and Europe by hurrying before popular outcry, as he refused to abandon her for any niggardliness of cabinets, or cabals of fanatics.

Those two years between Talavera and Ciudad Rodrigo sorely tried the patience and faith of the nation. For while they were slowly passing, Buonaparte had imposed on Sweden one of his generals as

king, whilst Austria had given the Corsican an Archduchess in marriage, and an heir had been born to perpetuate the new dynasty ; and a deplorable war had broken out with America, to my father the darkest and most unnatural of conflicts.

Yet there was a feeling of hope through the nation, the indescribable sense of vitality and growth which distinguishes the dullest spring day from the finest day in autumn.

One hero was amongst us again, who never lost hope.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, behind the lines of Torres Vedras, persisted that Buonaparte's empire was undermined ; and that England had only to hold her own, and keep hope alive in the Peninsula a little longer, and the crash would come.

Meantime, in this silence and isolation of our country, there was anything but silence or lifelessness.

In 1811 the first steamboat was launched on the Clyde. The great Steam Power had made another conquest.

In the same year the anti-slavery cause gained another victory by the passing of Lord Brougham's Bill, constituting slave-trading felony.

And throughout the land sounded a chorus of new poetic voices. Buonaparte could create no literature in France. But Freedom, and the conflict with the oppressor, awoke a fresh burst of poetry and art in England.

Once more, as in the days of Luther, English thought drank from the old kindred Teutonic sources (once more themselves issuing afresh into the light), giving and receiving, as is natural and due between races so one and yet so diverse.

Scott and Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Keats, Shelley, began to be heard among us. And Flaxman was there for

the sculpture of our heroes and singers ; now that we had again heroes and poets to celebrate.

It was an era of new life ; although the powers of death and darkness, storm and whirlwind, were still mighty in the world. As of old, in all our northern spring-tides, the hammer of Thor the Thunderer wakened the earth to song.

And meanwhile, in our little world of Abbot's Weir, life and death were at work.

The feet of little children pattered about the old rooms at Danescombe Manor, and merry little voices echoed among the old trees. The garden terraces of the old house in Abbot's Weir, the Dropping Well and the Aladdin's "Subterranean Passage," became scenes of hopes and delights to a new generation.

Little cousins came to join them, also, from the Vicarage. Once more little

motherless children played on the slopes, and along the Leas and the Leat. For during our cousin Dick's absence with the fleet, Patience, his young wife, had died, leaving a twin boy and girl. The strain of motherly care, coming on her so early, had been too much for her tender and anxious nature, and she passed away, leaving the great blank such gentle, devoted lives must leave.

Eager, eloquent, questioning voices may soon be replaced. It is the quiet answering voices, scarcely heard, except in response, in careful counsel, or in gentle decision, which leave the terrible void of silence.

She lived until the baptism of her babes. Piers and Claire and I were sponsors. I had always been drawn closely to her; and she had for me that strange strong affection which so often silently possesses natures that have little power of utterance.

Horatio, the boy, was called after his father's hero; and for the baby girl the mother would have her own name joined with mine.

"You will love the little ones, and they will love you," she said, "Bride, Cousin Bride!"

I did indeed love them. Who could have helped it, having a "grandmotherly" heart like mine? Dick was smitten to the dust by the loss of his wife's deep, quiet affection, and was only to be comforted by continual minute details about her babies.

And so it happened that their home was almost as much with us as with Uncle Fyford, to whom the babies were naturally a considerable perplexity.

Mrs. Danescombe was more patient with these little ones than she had been with us.

Indeed, she seemed more dependent and more sympathetic in many ways than of old.

The love for her Francis, which seemed

first to have awakened her heart to the joy of loving, brought to her further teaching through the burdens and sorrows, and even the disappointments of love.

Mrs. Dionysia was not at all a person meekly to take the second place. And my stepmother, when she returned from her visits to Francis, seemed to me to cling increasingly to us, and to accept our attention and deference with a gratitude very different from her old way of taking everything as a matter of course.

Moreover, these visits became rarer, as Francis became established as a popular preacher in a fashionable watering-place, where his exquisite manners and rounded periods made a great impression; and as Mrs. Francis left her village origin farther and farther behind, whilst her father's death left her joint-heiress of his not inconsiderable accumulation of savings.

Mrs. Danescombe never blamed them.

She had too long been used to throw a veil over Francis' failings, to hide them from others ; and now it touched me to see how she tried to transfer the veil, so as to hide what she could not bear to see, from herself.

Francis' family increased ; the spare room in the house diminished. The grandmother's visits became limited to an annual one, and this again had to be limited in extent. There was only one small room,—Francis' dressing-room—when his mother was not there. Of course Mrs. Danescombe was most welcome to it. But she could not but feel she was costing them a sacrifice of comfort while she stayed.

And at last, one year, instead of the annual invitation, came a long apologetic epistle from Francis. He and his wife were so ^{*}distressed ; but they had been obliged to make other arrangements in the house. One of the children had to sleep in the dressing-room. Francis had to con-

tent himself with a strip of a room on another floor, which really Dionysia could not think of asking his mother to occupy. They must hope for more space in a little time. Dionysia talked of investing part of her property in building a house. But for the present, with the greatest regret, they were reluctantly compelled to deny themselves their annual pleasure, &c.

Mrs. Danescombe gave me the letter to read. I felt an indignant flush rise to my cheek, and could scarcely restrain myself from warm words of blame.

But my stepmother said—

“You see they have talked it over, and done their best to manage it for me. But they cannot. I will make haste and pack up the little presents for the children, that they may get them in time.”

We did not say another word, but I helped her to finish and pack the gifts she had been so busy preparing,—little

knitted socks, warm grandmotherly articles of winter clothing, packets of manifold many-coloured sweetmeats, yeleft "fairing," picture-books, and some little luxuries Francis had been fond of as a child.

She took it very quietly. But the tears came many times into my eyes, as I helped her. And when the hamper was filled and carefully corded, she sat looking at it a moment, and then said—

"It will please the little ones."

And then, with a child-like, helpless look, and a quiet hopeless tone I shall never forget, she said—

"They do not want me. No one wants me."

I tried to comfort her. I said, "We all wanted her—*I wanted her*;" which, little as I could ever have thought it, began to be really true.

But she shook her head.

Then I went back to the subject of

Francis, and spoke of the new house, and the room there would be sure to be in it for her. She tried to take up the hope.

“I am afraid I have been too much given to interfering and finding fault,” she said, humbly. “Dionysia said so. I tried not to offend her. But perhaps I said too much. And she does not bear much. She naturally thinks of her own children, as I thought of my Francis. I should have remembered better. I suppose I made an idol and am punished.”

I don’t know what I said then, she touched me so to the heart. I blamed myself, and made the best of Francis, and said many incoherent things. But what I felt in the depth of my heart, and ended with was—

“Oh don’t talk of making idols. God gave you a child. And you loved him with your whole heart. He was your joy. And that did your heart good, and warmed it all

through. And now your love brings you pain. And that does us good, more than anything; the suffering of love. Idols *harden* the heart. Your love *softens* your heart. This is not idolatry. Idolatry is selfishness; worshipping anything or any one for *our own sakes*. This that makes you suffer is *love*. God is not punishing you; He is softening, teaching—making you so dear and good! You love, and suffer, and yet love on. In what better way, in what way more like Himself, can God teach?”

She did not oppose. She kissed me, and said I was kind, but that I was not to think Francis meant anything unkind.

“One day, perhaps, he will love enough to suffer,” I ventured to say, “and then God will teach him.”

“Not suffer!” she said, deprecatingly. “Please God, at all events, not *much*. It is not much he has to learn.”

We did all we could to cheer her, my

father and I. But the "serpent's tooth" had penetrated.

Many an hour we passed in the old Oak Parlour, such as I had never dreamt we could spend there together. I read and chatted to her. She did not talk much. Her range of literature was not large. Novels hurt her. It was so difficult to find any story of human life which did not grate like a saw on that sore heart. In history she had no interest; poetry she felt flimsy. To sermons and religious books, I do not think she attended much; but these were what she liked best. The good words flowed past her like the murmur of a brook; while she sewed, and knitted, and embroidered, for Francis and his children.

And then came a cold; the last blow which so easily strikes down a frame which has lost any strong vital power of resistance.

She did not very much care to live. She

hoped Dionysia would one day build the new house, and they would have room for her. Yet *they could do without her* ; that was too plain : and that was the unutterable anguish.

She did not much wish to die. It was not clear what heaven could have better for her than Francis had been. And even in heaven perhaps Francis would not need her. But she hoped God would be merciful, and pity and forgive her. And so life could be lived on there or here.

I wrote to Francis at the first symptoms of serious illness, urgently. I thought it would be so terrible for him if he did not arrive in time. He wrote back very eloquent and affectionate messages. But there was to be an Archdeacon's Visitation, and he was to preach the sermon. It was an opportunity of some importance ; an honour, he was sure his mother would be sorry for him to miss. I must write again

immediately; and if the accounts were not better, he would come by the earliest coach.

His poor mother did quite appreciate the honour.

“Tell him on no account to lose it for me,” she said. “He will come as soon as he can afterwards, I know.”

I wrote, in contradiction to her wish, urging him to give up the Visitation, and come at once. But there were no telegraphs and no railways in those days. My letter arrived on the eve of the Visitation. Dionysia had prepared a considerable entertainment. No one could say what might depend on such an occasion, or result from it. He preached the sermon, and started on the next morning.

Mrs. Danescombe did not ask if Francis had come. But she asked every evening if the coach had arrived. And when she was told it had, and no further news followed,

she said nothing more; except on the last evening, and then she moaned—

“I am weaker to-night, and worse. Poor Francis, he will be very sorry.”

And then, after an interval—

“Bridget, poor little Bride, you have been very kind. You have done all you could.”

And again—

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. He must have loved very much. It *must* be good to go to Him.”

And again, in a feeble voice, as if to herself—

“Poor dear Francis! He will be very sorry. But, you see, he could not help it. He could not help it. Give him my dear love, and tell him I pray God to bless him, with my last breath.”

That morning the struggle was over. And we trusted she had found how good it is to be with God.

The next evening Francis came.

He was very much moved. He blamed himself, at first, bitterly.

Then the old habit returned on him. And he began to excuse himself, and to explain to us and to himself how impossible it was he could have done otherwise.

But when all was over, and his mother was laid in the family vault beside mine, the truer feeling came back.

"No one will ever love me as she did," he said to me as we sat alone together in the Oak Parlour—"never again. Would to God I had come the day before."

His sermon at the Archdeacon's Visitation was a great success. It brought him the presentation to an excellent living from the patron, who was one of the audience.

But I believe it brought him a far deeper blessing than that. It had brought him, through the irrevocable loss, through the

unfulfilled duty, a sense of irreparable, irremediable, ill-return for so much irrecoverable love, which pierced at last through all his scales and crusts of self-complacency, and left a sting of remorse and repentance within him, wakening the real heart within him to the softening discipline of a lifelong incurable pain.

There was no more only that smooth, transformed, respectable, but impenetrable larva of an "outside." There was, as Piers had always trusted, and I had so often doubted, a creature, still undeveloped and feeble, but living, and to live immortally, within.

There was no more only the Pharisee, prodigal or respectable, crude or transformed, thanking God for the fewness and shadowiness of his sins, and the efficacy of his repentance, and the success of his labours in turning other people from their real sinful sins.

There was the Publican, beating on his breast, in many a secret hour of that inward, irremediable pain; feeling great need of forgiveness, and asking it; and hoping that the unquenchable love which he had returned so ill, which had forgiven and loved to the last, might be matched by another Love, as enduring and as forgiving; and that he might be suffered one day, when all his popular sermons, and all his much-lauded labours were over, to follow up the lifelong confession, "Father, I have sinned against Thee," by saying what he could now never say on earth, "Mother, mother, I have sinned against *thee*," and so might creep humbled and pardoned into some lowly place among the redeemed, at last.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE close of the great melodramatic career of Buonaparte was drawing near at last ; a close more melodramatic than any of his bulletins. Or, rather, the drama had passed into other hands ; and the melodrama was deepening into true and terrible tragedy.

Wellington, and our little determined British army, were no longer crouching in expectation behind their defences. They were pressing on through Spain ; and day after day the coach dashed down the quiet streets of Abbot's Weir, garlanded with laurels for victory after victory—Salamanca, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos ; sonorous words rang as in old Roman days through the island ; and lastly, the significant prophetic

name "Vittoria." Vittoria! A great battle won at last on the very borders of France, with the French armies driven before us.

"Mere side scenes," some might say—mere skirmishes outside the great line of battle which, in the spring of 1812, had been terribly advancing in the far north, and was now more terribly ebbing.

Yet it was something to have stood alone as England did against that stream, when all the rest of the world were swept away before it. It was something for Europe, which Europe should scarcely forget, it was infinitely much for England, which England is not likely to forget.

From March to December that last act of the dreadful drama went on; essentially the last, for after it the doom was fixed, and all was scarcely more than epilogue, merely the last struggles of the dying, the last stroke of the *coup de grâce*.

In May, four hundred thousand men of

the Grand Army had crossed the Niemen to crush the great barbaric northern empire ; in December, scarcely twenty thousand baffled, beaten men crossed the Niemen again, the Grand Army broken and destroyed for ever ; fire and frost sweeping it away as if it had been something elemental, only to be crushed by elemental forces. Hundreds of thousands dying, one by one, on battle-fields, in exhausting marches, of hunger, of cold, of wounds ; and, among all the dying, it was said, scarcely one murmur against the man for whom and through whom, in various tortures, and for no purpose, they died. The Triumph of Loyalty (misplaced as it might be), after all greater than the Triumph of Death ; thus reviving (my father said) for the human race capable of so enduring and so sacrificing, a hope, out of the very depths of the misery to which it was sacrificed.

“ With Christ instead of Buonaparte, for the King of Kings ! ” he used to say, “ what might our race have done—what may it not yet do ? ”

Yet, once again, France responded to the well-known call. Buonaparte, baffled and defeated, with the loss of nearly half a million, not to be hidden by the most grandiloquent bulletins from the thousands of homes whence they were missed, yet had power to gather two hundred and fifty thousand more to encounter the nations at Leipzig ; boys four-fifths of them, reluctant and untrained, yet once under the magic of that imperial name and command, able to win the day in more than one hard-fought fight.

Nevertheless, the great destructive power of Napoleon was broken.

It was no more a conflict of dynasties, but a combat of nations. Never was a truer name given to a battle than that of “ Battle

of the Nations" (Völkerschlacht), claimed for Leipzig.

After his defeat there, Buonaparte knew that for him universal empire was over.

Professors, pastors, parents stirred sons, students, congregations to this War of Liberation of the Fatherland. Ancient history, Bible history, ceased to belong only to the past. The old heroic stories lived again, and became a source of inspiration for the defence of all that was sacred in life, or all that was more sacred than life. Songs and ballads, strong and fresh as at the dawn of history, rang from the hearts and lips of the nation.

In one sense, indeed, Buonaparte had created. He had created by destroying. He had renewed through death. At Jena, but seven years before, he had crushed and broken and dismembered the various states of the old Teutonic empire. At Leipzig, he found springing from the scattered ashes a

new, patriotic, living Germany. Out of ruin had sprung restoration; out of states, a nation. And against nations the destroyer had no power.

France, indeed, seemed, like the demoniac in the Gospel, still not to be able to free herself from the awful double personality which had so long possessed her. Bewildered, fettered, and bleeding, she seemed still to answer at her tyrant's bidding through her reluctant conscripts, "My name is Legion, for we are many." But even this was soon to cease. The terrible delusion was becoming disentangled from her being.

In the South of France, where our Wellington with the first army which had proved Buonaparte's not "Invincible," was pursuing the retreating French troops, paying his way according to the bourgeois code of honour of "the nation of shopkeepers;" and, as we heard, welcomed by

the natives of the Garonne districts with indications of the old fortresses which our ancestors had once held, and with friendly inquiries why we did not come back.

And in April, at Fontainebleau, Buonaparte signed the abdication, leaving, as most of us then fondly thought, France once more clothed and in her right mind, at the feet of her ancient kings.

Then, in our England, followed three months of rejoicing, such as England has seldom seen. The very skies seemed to rejoice. The old country for a time threw off her veil of clouds, and shone and laughed, as the green English land can shine and smile, through all her sunny uplands, and grassy meadows and wooded river slopes, to welcome the Allied Powers, and her own victorious soldiers, and peace.

Abbot's Weir was beside itself with delight. If England had her Wellington to be borne from the sea-coast at Dover, like

an ancient hero, on the shoulders of the enthusiastic men of Kent ; and if London had its three nights of illumination and its three weeks of festivity, leading the Allied Powers to think there was no poverty in the land (and also inconceivable plunder in the City); if the House of Commons rose to receive and thank our Duke—for we had now our Duke as truly as our King—while he sat loyally to receive the homage so fully his due; if Oxford had her Greek and Latin gratulatory speeches; we also in Abbot's Weir, in our manner, had our festivities, to us as imposing and important.

Had not Abbot's Weir also her heroic sons to welcome? And foremost of them was our cousin Captain Fyford, wounded at Trafalgar, and worn and battered by many a stormy day since, on the transport service for the Peninsular Army.

The spirit of old Elizabethan dramatic days had come over us, not imitatively, but

by the old inspiration. We were to have something approaching a Masque or Mystery ; although altogether ignoring any alliance with mediæval mummeries or papistical pomps.

There was to be a review of the gallant volunteers, and a sham fight ; to end in the triumphal chairing of our cousin Dick as the representative of the British forces, and the banishment of Buonaparte (in the shape of an apothecary of small stature and military bearing, great among the volunteers, who consented to be victimised for the public good) to an island in the middle of our river, designed to represent the Island of Elba.

It was a day of great festivity ; too really glad and natural to be riotous and irregular ; the country poured itself into the town ; flowers and green boughs and garlands and triumphal arches embowering the streets and festooning the windows ; the farmers and labourers with their wives and children

flocking in on foot through all the green and flower-strewn lanes, or in merry groups, on pillions, and in waggons ; whilst every householder in the town kept open house, and tables were spread in the streets.

The review of our volunteers on the Down went off in a way to convince us that had Napoleon had his coveted command of the Channel for twelve hours and landed, Abbot's Weir at least would have had little to fear.

On the Down, nature herself entered like the gayest of the revellers into our holiday, lavishing the sunshine of her clearest skies, and from the golden gardens of furze-blossom filling the fresh breezy air with delicate fragrance.

Captain Fyford having been duly honoured in the capacity of representative of the British Forces, and the military apothecary having been safely banished to the Island of Elba, all returned to

take their share in the feastings and the speechifyings, and afterwards in the dance in the old market-house. And it was still early in the night when the entertainments were over, and the merrymakers had broken up into various groups large or small, and were scattering through the lanes to village and hamlet, and solitary farmsteads among the hills.

All day the children had been with us, keeping close to me and Claire ; rather awed and stilled than excited by this universal holiday, and by this mysterious bursting of the whole adult population into play.

Little Horace and Patience especially, the motherless twins, being timid children, would scarcely let go my hands. They seemed to feel as if the world had been turned upside down, and the serious part of it had devolved on them.

Claire and I had thought Patience a little

feverish; and after the dance she went with me to see if the motherless little ones were sleeping peacefully in the old Vicarage.

We went alone together through the churchyard where our beloved were sleeping.

The town was growing hushed and quiet; only, now and then the voices of the returning country people calling to each other, sounded back from various distances along the valley and up the hills.

It was so still, that we could hear the rush of the river as we went on towards the Vicarage garden by which it flowed.

Softly we went up to the children's nursery, and there we found both the little ones sleeping tranquilly in their cots; and Claire and I tucked them up and kissed them, and then went down together into the garden.

"It was a fancy," she said, "but I did not like the motherless little ones not to

have something like a mother's kiss and care to-night."

And we went back through the church-yard.

We paused together a little by our sacred places there.

"The mothers, and the motherless!" she murmured. "I cannot bear to feel they are left out. Two resting-places. The children are asleep; and there is quiet here."

"But not sleep or dreams, Claire," I said; "the real life has begun for them. We watch by the sleep of the little ones unseen; and they surely watch by us."

"And yet *this* life is no dream!" she said; that life to her so rich and full and precious.

"Only as compared with the waking by-and-by," I said; "the life they have been awakened to—my mother and yours; and the mother of those little ones; and the poor mother whose love cost her such

anguish; and Loveday, who used to spread her motherly wings over us all."

We stood some minutes silent there, while the quiet flow of the river grew more and more audible.

And then the old church bells chimed out midnight—the deep silvery tones which sounded from so far away through the centuries.

"*Praise God*," they chimed, as on the first night of the century.

Since then how many dear voices, then with us "creatures here below," had passed among "the heavenly host!"

Yet still it was one choir, and one song, to which the old bells set the tune.

We were turning away, when Piers and Captain Fyford came to look for us, and went home with us through the silent streets to the old house on the market-place.

And then Captain Fyford made a request

to me, in broken and doubtful words, which at the time seemed strange and scarcely possible to grant; but which I thought of again and again, and at last found I could not help granting.

“It would make so little difference,” as Uncle Fyford had said of his first marriage.

And yet it has made all the difference to me.

CHAPTER XIV.

SO it came about that once more there reigned a stepmother and a motherless little boy and girl in our old house at home.

And that impressive moral tale which was the romance and consolation of my childhood, of how I would behave to little children situated as Piers and I were, had an opportunity of being translated into fact.

"So runs the round of life from hour to hour."

Yet it is never the same round. The outward forms and scenes may be the same ; but the whole inward life which makes the real drama varies endlessly. The very sameness constitutes the difference. We need never fear monotony in a world where God organizes every leaf diversely, and

creates personalities as individual as Adam's; and in which circumstance, and sin, and conflict twist these into varieties so inconceivable. The type endlessly various; and endlessly diverged from.

Therefore the morals of those very "pointed" tales of my childhood never came precisely into play.

My temptations and my poor step-mother's, from within and without, were by no means the same.

In the first place, my step-children and I began by loving each other very dearly; and if I shrank determinedly, as I did, from assuming Patience's rights and titles, and being called "mother," it mattered comparatively little to them, because it so happened that "Cousin Bride" had long been to them a name expressive of the person who loved them best in the world.

And in the second place, by no compact or command or sanction, it nevertheless

came to pass that I had to submit, in the end, to being called "mother." When or how it began I cannot recall ; but I could not forbid to these first-born children the name my own children called me.

The truth would have been rather violated than preserved by my rejecting it, although I often tried to show both Horace and Patience that they were better off even than my own, having always that other sacred and undying love watching over them and awaiting them above.

Our home was not built over forgotten graves. It was a tent on the threshold of the Father's House.

That first gleam of peace which we had all celebrated as permanent passed away. War came again ; and Waterloo and St. Helena.

And the warfare which Loveday had cared for, which, as we believed, she was

ever caring for still — was carried on to other stages, and through new combatants, although many of the veterans lived yet to carry on the war.

Faithfully Clapham did its part in the combat; and faithfully the Moravian and Methodist missionaries (with our Amice and Hervé Godefroy among them) did theirs.

Clapham, with its offshoots and dependencies, grew richer and more prosperous; and its generosity kept pace with its wealth.

How could it help growing rich?

Being religious makes people prudent and energetic; being prudent and energetic makes people, in the main, rich. And if being rich does not always help people to remain religious, once more from the depths, from the poor, God calls His rich — rich in faith — and strong, through the prayer and fasting by which only the worst “kind” of “foul spirit” goeth out. And thus the healthy air circulates, and the

world is kept sweet, by light and fragrance, and by salt and fire.

Clapham held meetings, and brought Bills into Parliament, and subscribed tens and hundreds of thousands, and from its suburban Paradises not only "visited" the prisons, but reformed them; not only gave alms to the poor, but educated them out of poverty; not only visited the sick, but healed them in hospitals and convalescent homes; it allured congregations by the thousand, and set them to work on the millions.

And, meanwhile, in Persia, Henry Martyn, sent forth from its midst, toiled, and preached, and died, alone; and left but one convert; but inspired countless other lives.

My cousins married; Harriet the "Reformer" a devoted clergyman who lived and toiled in the missionary field, unpicturesque and illimitable, of the low districts of London; Phœbe went to be the comfort

of her husband's country parish; Matilda married a wealthy merchant, and admired and assisted other people's excellent works to her heart's content; every one of them bearing with them, wherever they went, the sunshine and sweetness of that bright early home, from which little Martha had early passed away, leaving the most fragrant memory of all.

And Amice and Hervé Godefroy, with their Moravians, worked on also in their own place, not exactly prosperous, not growing at all rich, sorely tried often, often failing in health; but sometimes overpaid with such rare, unutterable delights as only such service enfolds; by seeing hearts that had seemed dead wake up, and live, and rejoice, and serve; by seeing sufferings nobly borne and nobly avenged, evil conquered by good — patient, faithful lives crowned by joyful death.

Some of their slaves they emancipated

and sent to the new free colony of Sierra Leone. And among the rest the labour proved, so far, not in vain, that at the general emancipation in 1832, the islands in which missionary work had been most encouraged, found themselves able to anticipate the period of apprenticeship, and to trust the slaves with immediate freedom.

And then their work, as far as they could do it, was done. They had parted with their children long before, to be brought up in the bracing English climate, away from the enervating influences, physical and moral, around them there.

But they themselves stayed till the emancipation. Having put their hands to the plough, they turned not back.

And then at last they returned, and took a cottage on the hills near us, hoping that the vigour of the moorland air would restore the vigour they — but chiefly Captain Godefroy—had lost.

Their reward was not visibly here ; except indeed for that best reward of doing good work, and for the rare blessedness of that incomparable companionship of a perfect marriage during the years which they were given to spend together ; years, one of which had more life in it than many a lifetime.

Not on the heights ; low among the heavy-laden, helping them to bear the burdens, Amice had thought this the highest. And God gave her her highest ; I think also His highest, the place His highest took on earth.

“We need not try to make life hard to ourselves,” Amice had once said, speaking of Clapham ; “what are the little pin-pricks we can inflict on ourselves ? When God wounds, it *is* wounding, and we learn ;—learn to suffer as He suffered. And when He heals, it *is* healing ; and we learn more—learn in our measure to heal as He

healed." And so she found it—my Amice, our Amice, the treasure and the succour of us all.

* * * * *

Twenty-five years from that first abolition in 1807, through wars and adversity, and victory and peace, and again through new wars and new peace, that great anti-slavery conflict went steadfastly on, until, in 1832, the Vittoria, Leipzig, and Elba of the first war were succeeded by the Waterloo of the real final victory; the twenty millions sterling freely given by England to redeem herself and Africa from the great wrong: the banishment of the iniquity for ever from all lands over which England held sway.

To the last the veteran leader, William Wilberforce, lived and fought on; at the very last (by one of those weird repetitions of history which read like the refrain of a dirge), like Pitt and Fox in the first campaigns of the war, dying, if not before

the victory was won, yet before the day of triumph dawned. And the whole House of Commons followed him to his grave in Westminster Abbey.

The sixty years' war was over; once more, evil had been conquered by good.

A conflict still, as we know, to be succeeded by other conflicts elsewhere, in the same cause; never indeed to be finished, until the iniquity shall be banished utterly from the world.

And then, and then?

Other wrongs, other slaveries, other warfares, other victories; as long as the source of all wrongs and all bondage remains in man; the great mystery of iniquity, beside which all else that we call darkness is penetrable, the awful possibility of the slavery of selfishness and disobedience, involved in the very power to love and obey.

Patiently, for more than half a century, that great anti-slavery struggle went on;

the "moral atmosphere," which we call public opinion, slowly clearing and becoming healthy in the only way in which "moral atmospheres" ever do clear and become healthy; not by any volcanic irresistible convulsion, as of the elements; nor by slow inevitable diffusion, as of the seasons; but by a strenuous keeping or restoring of the sanitary laws; by a laborious clearing and planting, and embanking, and draining away of everything that causes malaria; by a few brave and patient men, often at first by only one, refusing to drift smoothly along with the evil current of the times, but pulling resolutely *Against the Stream*.

THE END.

LIST OF BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

STRAHAN AND CO.,

56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON.

By **ALFRED TENNYSON, D.C.L.**

POET LAUREATE.

1. POEMS. Small 8vo, 9s.
 2. MAUD, and other Poems. Small 8vo, 5s.
 3. THE PRINCESS. Small 8vo, 5s.
 4. IDYLLS OF THE KING. Small 8vo, 7s.
Collected, small 8vo, 12s.
 5. ENOCH ARDEN, &c. Small 8vo, 6s.
 6. THE HOLY GRAIL, and other Poems. Small 8vo, 7s.
 7. GARETH AND LYNETTE, &c. Small 8vo, 5s.
 - SELECTIONS FROM THE ABOVE WORKS. Square
8vo, cloth extra, 5s.
 - SONGS FROM THE ABOVE WORKS. Square 8vo,
cloth extra, 5s.
-

IN MEMORIAM. Small 8vo, 6s.

LIBRARY EDITION OF MR. TENNYSON'S WORKS.

6 vols., post 8vo, 10s. 6d. each.

POCKET VOLUME EDITION OF MR. TENNYSON'S WORKS.

11 vols. in neat case, £2 10s.; gilt extra, £2 15s.

THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONGS OF THE WRENS.

A series of Songs by ALFRED TENNYSON, with Music by ARTHUR SULLIVAN. 4to, cloth gilt extra, 21s.

By the **DUKE of ARGYLL.**

1. THE REIGN OF LAW. Crown 8vo, 6s. People's Edition. Limp cloth, 2s. 6d.
2. PRIMEVAL MAN. An Examination of some Recent Speculations. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d.
3. IONA. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

By HENRY ALFORD, D.D.

THE LATE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

1. THE BOOK OF GENESIS AND PART OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS. A Revised Version, with Marginal References and an Explanatory Commentary. Demy 8vo, 12s.
2. THE NEW TESTAMENT. Authorised Version Revised. Long Primer, crown 8vo, 6s. Brevier, fcap. 8vo, 3s. 6d. Nonpareil, small 8vo, 1s. 6d.
3. ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES, chiefly on Church Subjects. Demy 8vo, 7s. 6d.
4. THE YEAR OF PRAYER; being Family Prayers for the Christian Year. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.; Small 8vo, 1s. 6d.
5. THE YEAR OF PRAISE; being Hymns with Tunes for the Sundays and Holidays of the Year. Large type, with music, 3s. 6d.; without music, 1s. Small type, with music, 1s. 6d.; without music, 6d. Tonic Sol-fa Edition, 1s. 6d.
6. HOW TO STUDY THE NEW TESTAMENT. 3 vols., small 8vo, 3s. 6d. each.
7. LETTERS FROM ABROAD. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.
8. THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH. A Manual of Idiom and Usage. Enlarged Edition. Small 8vo, 5s.

By PETER BAYNE.

1. THE DAYS OF JEZEBEL. An Historical Drama. Crown 8vo, 6s.
2. THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF HUGH MILLER. 2 vols., demy 8vo, 32s.

By Professor J. S. BLACKIE.

- LAYS OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS. Small 8vo, 6s.

By HORACE BUSHNELL, D.D.

1. MORAL USES OF DARK THINGS. Crown 8vo, 6s.
2. CHRIST AND HIS SALVATION, in Sermons variously related thereto. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d.
3. CHRISTIAN NURTURE; or the Godly Up-bringing of Children. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.
4. NATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL, as Together constituting the One System of God. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.
5. THE CHARACTER OF JESUS. Limp cloth, 6d.
6. THE NEW LIFE. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.
7. THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE, grounded on Principles of Universal Obligation. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 041673077